

# **PERIODIC REVIEW REPORT**

**Presented by:**

**NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BETHLEHEM PA**

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President**

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## Section 1: Executive Summary

### NCC at a Glance

Northampton Community College is a public, two-year comprehensive community college in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It is centrally located in Northampton County, midway between Bethlehem and Easton, with a branch campus in Monroe County, 40 miles to the north of the Main Campus. Northampton County is 90 miles west of New York City and 50 miles north of Philadelphia. Its current estimated population is 294,787. Monroe County, adjacent to Northampton County, has an estimated population of 165,068.

NCC is a proud institution firmly rooted in a strong tradition of high expectations, hard work, academic integrity, student centeredness, community responsiveness and access and affordability. NCC's academic programs reflect its commitment to its mission, which was revised in 2007 in preparation for a new strategic plan: "Recognizing that students are the primary reason that Northampton Community College exists, we seek to provide excellent, accessible and comprehensive learning experiences in partnership with the dynamic, diverse communities we serve." The College is comprehensive, responsive to community needs, and offers degrees, certificates, and diplomas in over 100 different programs. Students seeking degrees may earn the Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), or the Associate in Applied Science (AAS).

Since the College opened its doors in 1967, 318,929 different people have taken courses, credit or non-credit, at Northampton. A total of 28,593 degrees, certificates, and specialized diplomas have been awarded, as of May 2009.

The College's Main Campus is a 209-acre complex comprised of 14 buildings - College Center, Spartan Center, Kopecek Hall, Penn Hall, Commonwealth Hall, Richardson Hall, Founders Hall, the Kiva, Reibman Hall, Communications Hall, Alumni Hall, County Hall, Hartzell Technology Center, and the Student Enrollment Center - as well as residence facilities and minor support buildings. The College also has a branch campus in Tannersville in Monroe County and two additional centers in Monroe County (Fountain Court and Corporate Center East), a downtown Bethlehem site (the Fowler Family Southside Center), satellite adult literacy centers in Pike and Wayne Counties, a satellite site providing general education for St Luke's School of Nursing, and an industrial technical site in a nearby industrial park. In addition, the College maintains apartments and a residence hall for students. Current facilities include 22 buildings totaling 859,484 square feet of building space. At these locations and at additional sites, 35,494 credit and non-credit students were served in 2008-2009.

During the FA09 semester, 11,218 students were enrolled in credit classes representing 8,287 FTEs. This represents a 28% increase in heads and a 36% increase in FTEs over five years. In addition, there has been an extraordinary increase in students from Monroe County. The Branch Campus, established in 1988, now enrolls 2,265 students [1].\*

Among the credit students enrolled at Northampton for FA09, 57% were residents of Northampton County. Another 40% came from other counties within Pennsylvania. Of the total enrollment, 3% came from outside Pennsylvania, including 158 international/foreign students from 40 different countries. The average age (26) of the NCC student has not changed significantly over the past five years, and neither has the composition of the student body by gender (about 60% female).

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\*Numbers in brackets refer to the Appendices.

Just over one-half of NCC students are part-time and the share of full-time students has been gradually increasing over time. In FA05, 42% of credit enrollment was full-time – in FA09, that proportion is 48%. While the majority of students are white, the percentage of minority students has been increasing significantly and they now comprise 23% of total credit enrollment.

As is true at the national level, NCC is focused on improving success rates of its students. The College is part of the Achieving the Dream (AtD), and 30% of our students possess one risk factor, 22% possess two, and 15% possess three or more risk factors (i.e., they are a student of color, 25 or older, part-time, have been referred to developmental courses, or are a Pell grant recipient – characteristics that are associated with decreased rates of persistence and credential completion). Thirty percent of our students place into developmental English, and 90% place into developmental math. A new developmental math course (MATH020) was added in FA07, and two new developmental English courses (replacing our existing single developmental English course) will be offered in SP10. In FA09, a College Success course became mandatory for those students testing into two or more developmental courses – in FA09, enrollments were at 224.

Many areas at the College are affected by the growth of the student body. The Student Affairs division is staffed by a cadre of professionals who provide high quality support to NCC students. The enrollment surge has put a strain on services offered to students, challenging the College's ability to maintain its commitment to the "personal touch" and student-centeredness. Nonetheless, this challenge is being met by incorporating technology where it benefits student access to service and where it assists with processing of records and information. For example, the College is being awarded a FIPSE grant, which will enable us to address issues related to student success in developmental math courses.

Computer Services provides the infrastructure and the tools for faculty to use the latest technology, such as automated response systems, social networking applications, web 2.0 capabilities, and SecondLife. These capabilities, when combined with the increased use of personal wireless devices by students and faculty, have motivated a significant number of faculty to integrate technology into their teaching. This, in turn, has created its own set of challenges. In recent years, we implemented virtual servers, which have reduced our power consumption as well as saved space and money on individual servers. The increased reliance on access to the Internet for our web-based systems and general usage has challenged our ability to provide ample bandwidth to all of our community at any given time. We are continuously researching cost effective, faster methods of meeting the demands of the campus. Computer Services provides exemplary administrative and academic support including assistance to distance learning faculty and students as well. As demand for technology expands, no doubt additional resources will be needed.

The success of the Office of Institutional Advancement, particularly in fundraising and in grants, is one of the major success stories at Northampton. The Foundation's endowment stands at \$21,524,853. In 2008-2009, grant money, which generally falls in the \$5.5 to \$7 million range, totaled \$6.3 million. Revenue from grants has been important in enhancing NCC's quality of education.

In terms of workforce development and non-credit activity, the Community Education Division continues to be a successful and productive arm of the College, although the last eighteen months have been difficult for this market-sensitive division. Enrollment in Community Education programs dropped by ten percent and excess revenue over expenses fell 50% in the last year. However, demand for Community Education programs is recovering and early indicators are that the most difficult times are over. The Division is recognized for its innovations, quality programs, and expertise in training and basic skills development. It has developed strong partnerships with business and community leaders and has taken a leadership role in addressing workforce development issues. The Division is highly diverse in its student population and corresponding course offerings. It has demonstrated its responsiveness and

flexibility to businesses and special populations, such as seniors and youth, by developing new courses and programs to meet changing needs. With new programs in Sustainable Energy, Hospitality and personal fabrication, the Division is continuing its reputation for innovation.

NCC prizes innovation and attempts to be on the cutting edge when it comes to putting students and their educational needs first. For example, we sent out ‘parking lot greeters’ on the first day of the semester this fall to help our students get to class and to answer their questions. Realizing that most of our students work and that financial aid is not always enough to cover college costs, we researched and decided to offer textbook rentals to our students this semester. With unemployment at record levels, we decided to offer a tuition waiver – to date 443 laid off workers have taken advantage of it as a way to retool for new careers. These activities, along with those cited in this PRR, characterize NCC.

### NCC’s Approach to the Preparation of the PRR

As noted in the MSCHE PRR Handbook, the PRR is not a mini-self-study and the preparation of this PRR involved far fewer people than the number involved in the self-study. The Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Administrative Affairs, and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment and Planning assumed primary responsibility for the preparation of the report.

A plan and a process to prepare the PRR was laid out in FA08, and the collection of material and information to respond to the 49 recommendations from the 2005 team report and institutional self-study began that semester as well. Writing began in SP09 and continued through FA09 to ensure that the most recent information was contained in the PRR. The President’s Cabinet, NCC staff and faculty, and the Board of Trustees reviewed the draft report, and final modifications were then made.

### Major Changes and Developments since the Decennial Accreditation

In NCC’s self-study, several issues were identified as having substantial impact on the College. Among these issues were substantial enrollment growth, significant numbers of new faculty and staff, and diminishing state funding. Five years later, these issues are still significant: In 2004, when our self-study was being prepared, we had a credit headcount of more than 8,000 students – in FA09, we have 11,218. Five years ago, we had 2,185 students from Monroe County – we now have almost 3,000. Five years ago, plans were underway to open a new urban campus on the Southside of the City of Bethlehem in a facility once owned by Bethlehem Steel – a facility that opened in 2005-2006 and served almost 5,800 credit and non-credit students in 2008-2009.

Our commitment to access continues to challenge us and managing growth is a primary emphasis of our activities. Enrollment at our Monroe Campus rose from 1,817 in FA05 to 2,265 in FA09 – a 25% increase. To deal with this explosive growth, the College purchased 71 acres in Tannersville to build a new campus at this site. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has committed to \$36 million and, in early 2010, the governor signed legislation that dedicates \$2.4 million each year for 20 years to pay for the new campus. Ground-breaking is anticipated to occur during the FA10 semester.

Increases in enrollment, accompanied by several years of continuing faculty and staff retirements, have produced a large number of new staff. Over the last five years, the College has hired 40 new full-time faculty, of whom 12 (30%) are minority, along with 105 new administrators and staff, of whom 26 (25%) are minority. Significant gains have been made in increasing the number of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. The College also hired a new vice president for Academic Affairs and two acting academic deans became full deans. In FA09, a new academic division – Education and Academic Success – was created in part to address new Pennsylvania regulations concerning the preparation of teachers and to address critical student retention and success initiatives at the college. At the same time, a

new dean was appointed to Humanities and Social Sciences. Both veteran and new faculty and staff are talented, dedicated and loyal to the institution and to their students. Together, they constitute our most significant asset.

NCC released a new strategic plan in FA08 [2]. The *Strategic Plan 2009–2014* and its three strategic initiatives of access, excellence, and engagement provide direction and focus for the College and serve in defining its direction and position in the realm of the higher education community. The three strategic initiatives were retained from the 2003-2008 plan – providing continuity from the past while allowing the College to strike out in some new directions. The Plan constitutes a clear statement of the College’s goals and an annual collaborative process involving the administration and the faculty produces a set of priority goals and action plans. Each goal is linked to one of the three strategic initiatives, and updates provide a clear indication of progress.

The academic program reflects Northampton’s commitment to its mission and we continue to add new programs and courses where we see a need, to revamp those that need updating, and to discontinue those that are no longer needed. Over the past five years, NCC has added the following programs:

Early Childhood Ed.: Infant to Grade 4 (Cert)	Sports Medicine: Athletic Training (AS)
Early Childhood Ed.: Infant to Grade 4 (AAS)	Construction Management (AAS)
Infant Toddler Child Development Associate (SD)	Electrical Construction Technology (IBEW)(AAS)
Middle Level Ed.: Grades 4-8 (AS)	Emergency Services Administration (AAS)
Asceptic Processing (SD)	Marketing (AAS)
Automation Control in Biomanufacturing (SD)	Medical Assistant (SD)
Hotel/Restaurant Management – Casino Operations (SD);	Web Development (AAS)
Dining Room Operations (SD); Resort Management (SD)	

We have added over 100 new courses to support these and other programs. We also support an Honors Program, study abroad experiences, and an extensive online learning program.

Just under one-half of the 49 recommendations from the 2005 team report and institutional self-study were related to assessment and these are addressed in detail in Section 2 below. Highlights in this arena include the following: In terms of institution-wide assessment activities, NCC continues to prepare annual Institutional Effectiveness Plans, which include student learning outcomes assessment processes and plans. The College also continues to issue annual “Indicators of Effectiveness.” It joined the AtD initiative in 2006 and it participated in the CCSSE in 2006, 2007 and 2009, and in the CCFSSE in 2009.

Revisions to the General Education (GE) core outcomes began in FA05; by SP08, new outcomes and an assessment plan for them were approved. In 2008-2009, a new Information Literacy outcome was added to the core and an assessment of the GE writing outcome began. In 2009-2010, work continues on implementing Information Literacy outcomes, revising a Diversity/Global Awareness outcome, developing outcomes for Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, continuing with the writing outcomes assessment project, and assessing Science and Quantitative Literacy.

GE assessments occur under the auspices of NCC’s Student Learning Outcomes Committee (SLOC), which was established in FA08. The SLOC also played an instrumental role in assessing accounting, English and biology student learning outcomes in 2008-2009. Faculty and staff participating in AtD regularly review assessment data on NCC’s developmental math and English courses, with multiple changes instituted in developmental math courses as a result of these reviews. Gateway courses (those enrolling over 100 students per semester) have also been subject to extensive analyses. The latter led to the creation of Student Learning Improvement Conversations in FA09 as a way to begin problem-solving issues around student learning to improve student success, retention, and eventually graduation

rates. NCC's Center for Teaching and Learning has held numerous workshops and trainings sessions to help faculty with their assessment plans.

Academic support divisions and departments have been and continue to be involved in assessment activities; to mention only a few, Student Affairs regularly assesses its student and parent orientations and its student leadership seminars, the Library just completed an assessment of its services and facilities, Facilities developed a Work Order assessment of its services, and Finance and Institutional Advancement regularly benchmark their activities against other community colleges.

NCC enrollments could continue to increase at a strong pace given current economic realities in the region. Should state and local sponsors lag with their contributions, NCC will be challenged to meet the expenditures required to support enrollments and will need to rely on tuition and fee increases to make up the shortfall. With all of these challenges and unknowns, NCC has ended each fiscal year from 2005 through 2009 with a surplus and projects to do the same through 2013. Additional sources of revenue will continue to be a focus area. Given the unstable nature of the funding sources, the College will be challenged to meet the increase of fixed costs, merit increases, health insurance increases and utility costs. The college must plan strategically and effectively in order to continue to deliver high quality educational programs and services within fiscal restraints.

These are challenging times, but challenges always bring with them new opportunities. Fortunately, we enjoy broad community support and a history of success in providing high quality instruction and services to our students and in meeting the needs of our community.

### Highlights of the PRR

Many of the 2005 self-study and MSCHE recommendations [3] were directed at assessment, and this is reflected in NCC's responses and in supporting documentation. A great deal of progress has been made in the College's assessment of plans and programs, both academic and otherwise. An overview is provided in the PRR; details are contained in NCC's Institutional Effectiveness Plan, which provides a comprehensive examination of institutional and student learning assessment.

Highlights that are addressed in the PRR include the following:

- New Monroe campus
- Fowler Family Southside Center development
- Professional development opportunities
- Ten-Year Facilities Master Plan, Ten-Year Environmental and Energy Conservation Plan, and Computer Services Strategic Plan
- Revamping of governance system
- Climate Survey 2008
- Improvements in Student Services
- New Academic Division: Education and Academic Success Division and New Assistant Dean in Humanities and Social Sciences Division
- Revision of General Education student learning outcomes
- Assessment of General Education student learning outcomes
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessments and Student Learning Improvement Conversations

## Section 2: Responses to Recommendations\*

### Standard 1: MISSION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES

*NCC: The College should review the mission every five years in conjunction with the development of a new strategic plan. Techniques to more purposely and regularly assess the ten student-centered dimensions of our mission should be explored, as should ways to ensure that faculty and staff are always mindful of and guided by the mission in our day-to-day activities.*

*MST: The college mission, which should be reviewed by campus stakeholders on a regular basis, needs to be directly tied to strategic planning and assessment processes, and benchmarks for achievement need to be established at all levels in the interest of ongoing and continuous improvement in institutional effectiveness.*

NCC began a review of its mission – along with its vision, value and diversity statements – in FA06, when it began preparations for the development of a new strategic plan. Campus-wide stakeholders reviewed and revised NCC’s mission, vision, values and diversity statements and the Board of Trustees approved revised statements in June, 2007 [4]. The new mission is as follows: “Recognizing that students are the primary reason that Northampton Community College exists, we seek to provide excellent, accessible and comprehensive learning experiences in partnership with the dynamic, diverse communities we serve.”

This new mission, along with the revised vision, values and diversity statements, served as the basis for developing the new strategic plan. Comprehensive external and internal environmental scans were conducted in FA07, and 35 strategic conversations with almost 500 individuals from within and outside of the college were held in FA07 and SP08 to assist in the development of the new plan. This plan was released in FA08 and it includes the college’s three strategic initiatives – access, excellence, and engagement – which are derived from and support the new mission [2]. The plan will be updated in 2015, when the next strategic planning process – beginning with the review of the mission, vision, values and diversity statements – starts again.

The ten student-centered dimensions contained in the prior mission statement no longer exist – but the mission of the college is assessed on a regular basis. As noted in the Institutional Effectiveness Plan [5], assessment occurs via the college’s strategic initiatives and action plans, its Indicators of Effectiveness, participation in national surveys, its AtD work, and climate and student surveys.

Faculty and staff are very cognizant of our strategic initiatives of access, engagement and excellence. Many of them participated in the formulation of the new strategic plan. They are an integral part of many if not most college-wide committees and task forces, and they are an integral part of the college’s annual planning process. Each year, the President’s cabinet meets in June to identify priorities related to our strategic initiatives and these priorities, in turn, serve as the basis for annual plans prepared by every division. These plans are submitted to the Office of Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR); updates are provided to all staff and faculty in January and June [6].

The college participates in a number of national community college benchmarking surveys and uses the results to examine its level of accomplishment. Primary among them are the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) and the Community College Survey of Student

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\*Recommendations from the College’s self-study are designated by “NCC” and those from the evaluation report are designated by “MST.”

Engagement (CCSSE). Results from the former allow us to assess institutional effectiveness from a wide variety of perspectives, such as student success in college-level, core, and developmental courses; high school participation rates; and instructional and training costs.

As another example, CCSSE results enable us to look at student engagement at NCC. As noted in the CCSSE “MSCHE Accreditation Toolkit,” items 9a through 9f provide evidence of institutional support for learners, a critical aspect of NCC’s mission. As shown below, NCC’s 2009 results compare very favorably with those of the CCSSE cohort – they exceed those of other large colleges on all items and they exceed the CCSSE cohort on four of the six items:

CCSSE Item: NCC Emphasizes "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much"	NCC	Other Large Colleges	CCSSE Cohort
Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying (9a)	72%	71%	72%
Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college (9b)	77%	71%	72%
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds (9c)	57%	50%	49%
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) (9d)	28%	25%	26%
Providing the support you need to thrive socially (9e)	39%	32%	32%
Providing the financial support you need to afford your education (9f)	47%	44%	47%

In 2009, NCC participated in the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), allowing it to examine the faculty perspective on student engagement. And, in 2006, NCC became an Achieving the Dream (AtD) college, providing us with additional information concerning student completion of courses, graduation and retention rates, and other variables.

NCC’s *Indicators of Institutional Effectiveness* [7] include results from these and other surveys and activities. Indicators are organized according to our mission and strategic initiatives; the report includes information on graduation, persistence and participation rates; student engagement; goal attainment; instructional faculty load; workforce development; transfer preparation; and financial stability and enhancement, among many others.

In sum, NCC reviewed its mission as it went about preparing its new strategic plan. Faculty, administration and staff were intimately involved in the preparation of the plan, and they are actively involved in planning, allocating resources, and assessing and improving their academic courses, programs, and services, all of which contribute to the learning-centered culture throughout the campus. Information concerning our institutional effectiveness is regularly distributed to and discussed throughout NCC and its external communities. When the strategic plan is updated, the mission will again be reviewed. NCC’s mission is assessed through a variety of activities, including national surveys, the IEP (which includes academic and other assessments), the *Indicators of Effectiveness*, and others mentioned throughout this PRR. While benchmarks have not been established at all levels, NCC strongly adheres to the principal of ongoing and continuous improvement.

**Standard 2: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION  
AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL**

*NCC: The College should work to improve communication in order to strengthen both the understanding of and sense of commitment to the planning and resource allocation processes.*



With enhanced communication, the planning and resource allocation process has become much more transparent at NCC over the past five years. The planning process is an integral part of the College culture – it determines major college goals and activities, the budget, and the actions of NCC faculty and staff. (Although admittedly, events sometimes dictate that we act quickly without as much time as we would like to plan all details.). NCC has been and continues to be committed to a participatory planning and budgeting process that advances our access, excellence and engagement initiatives. Every fall, all divisions and departments prepare planning documents for their areas. Every January, a mid-year review of these plans is distributed via email to all faculty and staff, including part-time employees. And every June, a year-end review of these plans is also distributed via email to these same individuals. Additionally, the Office of Finance and Operations presents budget information at professional and administrative staff meetings each year so that faculty and staff are knowledgeable about it and have an opportunity to ask questions.

*NCC: The College should maintain a planning process that is inclusive and develop new techniques to better assess its effectiveness on a regular basis.*

As a result of assessments made in 2005, and to make its planning process more inclusive, the College changed its planning committee process so that it had one planning day per semester. For example, in 2005-2006, planning days were devoted to Millennial students in the fall and to the use of technology in the classroom in the spring. For 2006-2007, the college devoted its planning activities to revising the College’s mission, vision, values and diversity statements and to AtD, and in the spring it held a Monroe campus planning day. For 2007-2008, NCC had a “planning year” (rather than two planning days) to develop its new strategic plan: this entailed two strategic planning committees, one devoted to an external scan of the environment and one devoted to an internal scan. To develop this plan, NCC held over 35 focus groups involving almost 500 participants from both within and outside of the College.

For 2008-2009, the College had another “planning year” as it continued its AtD work. All in all – between the AtD Steering Committee, the Developmental Education Task Force, the First Year Experience Task Force, and associated activities - well over 100 NCC faculty and staff have been involved in these initiatives. And, in 2009-2010, a new committee – African American Male Retention Initiative – was added to supplement these efforts.

In terms of assessing its planning efforts, the College focuses on results. A prime example is the AtD evaluation plan, which includes a review of plans, progress and challenges in multiple areas: developmental courses, placement test results, college success courses, faculty and staff development, and related programs (Smart Start, ACES Project, nursing retention programs, etc.) [8]. Another example is the year-end assessment of the Student Learning Outcomes Committee, which was conducted in SP09 and will be conducted again in SP10. The effectiveness of the new Student Learning Improvement Conversations (SLIC) will also be assessed at the conclusion of the SP10 semester. Changes such as these have made planning a more inclusive process, with more opportunities for input from staff, faculty and students. They have also provided the opportunity for new ways to assess the effectiveness of our planning process.

*MST: The College should improve the linkage of planning to the budgeting/resource allocation process.*

This recommendation is thoroughly addressed in Section 6, where it is noted that planning at the College is a continual process focused on fulfilling institutional and unit priorities (as found in the Strategic Plan 2009-2014) and identifying, allocating, and reallocating resources as necessary to achieve these objectives. The College has a formal annual planning process, and operational budget planning is tied to our goals and to the budget cycle of sponsoring school districts and the state. Linked planning and

budgeting is clearly evident in our development of the Fowler Family Southside Center, modifications to the Monroe campus, planning to build a new Monroe campus, and in our increased emphasis on student success. It is also evident in our new Ten-Year Facilities Master Plan [9] and Ten-Year Environmental and Energy Conservation Plan [10].

In addition, we modify planning and budgeting processes to increase operational effectiveness when necessary. This is perhaps best illustrated with the Teaching, Learning and Technology Roundtable (TLTR), which ties instructional technology recommendations to the impact they have on student learning. The TLTR is composed of faculty members nominated from clusters and various representatives from the administration. Forms and timelines have been changed over the past few years to align requests with funding and to align funding with implementation. For example, for the 2009-2010 academic year, faculty were asked to submit their TLTR proposals by October, 2008, so that review could begin in November, 2008. Existing computer labs and SmartRooms in need of general upgrade or refurbishment are proposed by Computer Services, not by faculty. Faculty requesting TurningPoint Audience Response System kits use one form; those requesting new SmartRooms or SmartCarts use another. A third form for specific changes or new technology - e.g., printers for the Fine Art program, laptops for science classes - is also used. Detailed questions are asked on the proposal forms (e.g., what are the basic details of the proposal, what are the intended outcomes, what evidence will be used to show the outcomes have been achieved, what courses will use the technology, what is the proposed budget, etc.). Specific guidelines are used in the review of requests and all requests are reviewed for accurate pricing estimates. Requests are prioritized by the VP of Academic Affairs and by Computer Services, and are then examined by other NCC staff to determine which can be funded by Perkins dollars and which can be funded from other sources. After this, they are reviewed by the Board of Trustees. Finally, for requests that are accepted, those requiring it are put out for bids. The entire process is completed by the end of the spring semester so that modifications and installations can be completed by the start of the fall semester. In 2009-2010, almost \$500,000 in TLTR- technology changes were made as a result of this comprehensive process.

### **Standard 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**

*NCC: Insufficient funding for Pennsylvania Community Colleges is creating a serious crisis which will affect their core mission of providing educational opportunity. Northampton, along with its sister colleges, must continue to strongly advocate for changes in state funding of community colleges and maintain its capacity to generate additional resources.*

Funding for higher education remains a challenge, especially since the economic downturn in 2008. "Act 46" (the revised state funding formula implemented in 2006) eliminated the reimbursement per FTE; funding is now based on a baseline annual enrollment and supplemented by more focused financial support for those programs determined to be high priority and high cost. As a result, enrollment growth is not reflected in state funding, and dollars per FTE student are down.

*NCC: The College needs to continue to develop a plan for increasing access to high quality affordable education in non-sponsorship areas.*

*NCC: The College should expand the Monroe Campus.*

A major enhancement of programs and facilities in non-sponsoring areas is the master plan to build a new Monroe Campus. As in Bethlehem, the Monroe Campus has experienced significant growth over the past five years, with current enrollment head count exceeding 2,200 students. In 2006, the College purchased 71 acres of land about one mile from the existing campus. Coupled with support from the Board of Trustees, Monroe County Commissioners, and other civic leaders, the College has plans for

a classroom building, student center and enrollment center that will increase the square footage in Monroe to 200,000 feet, up from the current 50,000.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has committed to \$36 million and, in early 2010, the governor signed legislation that dedicates \$2.4 million each year for 20 years to pay for the new NCC campus in Tannersville. Additional financing issues are being addressed and ground-breaking is anticipated to occur during the FA10 semester.

*NCC: As the College continues to grow, the College should continue to identify and implement ways to better communicate with faculty and staff, particularly with those who are employed on a part-time basis.*

College communications include a host of print and electronic media targeted at both full-time and part-time faculty and staff. These include the college’s website, a daily electronic newsletter that is emailed to all members of the College community during the academic year, and access to all college and departmental documents on a separate “g”-drive on the college’s network. Part-time faculty and staff also receive college wide and targeted emails through the Groupwise email network.

In FA09, NCC introduced a new college website and an “intranet” site. The latter is available to all full- and part-time employees and includes access to internal NCC information (e.g., MyNCC! provides access to employee forms, committee updates, announcements, and training opportunities; an Automated Leave System enables employees to request time off and to track their sick and vacation time).

*NCC: The College should explore ways to assess the impact of professional development offerings.*

Over the past five years, professional development opportunities for full- and part-time faculty and staff have been enhanced and expanded through a variety of programs. Most notably, the President’s Leadership Institute (PLI), which seeks to enrich the leadership potential of promising faculty and staff by broadening their college-wide perspective through workshops and dialogues with educational and community leaders, was begun in FA08. While the program may serve to develop the next generation of Northampton’s leadership cohort, it operates on the premise that faculty and staff lead wherever they are, not exclusively in senior administrative positions. The PLI is new and the long-term impact has yet to be realized. However, evaluations and follow up on the first year cohort suggest that the program is meeting its goal of developing future campus leaders. One graduate has entered a doctoral program in Higher Education Administration at Penn State University, with an intent to return to NCC; another has moved up to become an associate dean at the Monroe Campus.

In addition, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers well-attended seminars and workshops for full- and part-time faculty. The College budgets for study groups in which full-time faculty discuss pedagogy and other classroom issues with adjunct faculty. In addition, the College’s “Super Saturday” workshops for adjuncts, held in Bethlehem and Monroe each year, have drawn an increasing number of part-time faculty. Adjunct attendance at all CTL workshops rose to almost 500 in 2008-2009:

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Workshops Conducted	118	206	162
Workshop Attendees			
FT Faculty	263	560	515
Adjuncts	324	343	486

Part-time faculty and staff continue to be invited to attend professional staff meetings and semi-annual opening days' convocations and workshops.

The CTL and Office of Computer Services evaluate individual and short term programs. Currently, the CTL has targeted four approaches to authentic assessment of the professional development program. Within the AtD program, faculty members who have been involved in "formative assessment" projects (in Developmental Math and the Academic Success course) will be surveyed in FA09. These projects emphasize shared assignments, questions and assessment methods so that faculty will change approaches to measuring student learning progress. In a similar vein, the CTL will survey faculty who have used individual polling units ("Clickers") in their classes. As these have become increasingly popular instructional tools, it is important that we determine their impact on student learning and instructional practices.

In SU09, two Faculty Learning Communities (one for math instructors and one for developmental instructors in reading, English and counseling courses) were established. Faculty completed a pre-test to gather benchmark data on their attitudes and practices; the CTL will conduct a "post-test" survey with these same faculty to measure the impact of the program.

*NCC: The College should pursue the development of the Southside Bethlehem Center.*

In 2005, the College purchased the "South Side" Campus, the former general services office of the defunct Bethlehem Steel Corporation. In addition to substantial federal and state support for the project, the College received a gift from the Fowler family of Bethlehem and the site has since been renamed the Fowler Family Southside Center. Enrollment in credit and noncredit courses has already surpassed 5700 students as of the 2008-2009 academic year. With the opening of the Sands Casino and Resort complex adjacent to the property, the Fowler Family Center now sits in the middle of the urban redevelopment initiative for the South Side of Bethlehem. Approximately 100,000 square feet have been fully or substantially developed since 2005 (classrooms, computer labs, art studios, dance studios, a teaching kitchen, two advanced technology centers, multiple healthcare labs, and other educational space including a Workforce Development Center on the sixth floor). The College is planning for the full development of the remaining 80,000 square feet in the near future.

*NCC: The College should complete the development of a master facilities plan.*

*NCC: The College should develop an institutional technology plan.*

*MST: The team endorses self-study recommendations that a Technology Master Plan and a Facilities Master Plan be developed with direct linkages to the college's mission and strategic plan.*

A Computer Services Strategic Plan [11], a Ten-Year Facilities Master Plan [9], and a Ten-Year Environmental and Energy Conservation Plan [10] have all been developed and approved. All three are tied to the mission and strategic plan in key ways. The Computer Services Strategic Plan ties its goals and vision to the College's strategic initiatives and defines its services in terms of serving those values. Similarly, the Ten-Year Facilities Master Plan recognizes the importance of access and community engagement in its enrollment and facilities projections. Classroom space, parking, and infrastructure are all included in terms of how they best meet the needs of a growing community and student population. The mission of the Ten-Year Environmental and Energy Conservation Plan is to effect a reduction in NCC's environmental impact, energy and fuel consumption, and annual energy budget, all the while maintaining indoor environmental comfort and air quality.

## **Standard 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

NCC: *The College should assess the effectiveness of the existing governance system. The assessment should include an analysis of the role of ad hoc committees and the College Council.*

NCC: *The College should encourage increased student participation in college committees.*

MST: *Ensure that the college's governance structure enables and promotes meaningful faculty involvement in institutional decision making.*

In FA08, the President created the Governance By-Laws Revision Committee, charged with amending the governance by-laws as outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual (July, 2008 edition), section 2.21. The existing by-laws were no longer accurate or clear, containing references to bodies or committees that had been suspended or otherwise disbanded. The principal committee no longer functioning was the College Council, which had suspended operations in FA04. The By-Laws Revision Committee completed its work in SP08, and in its concluding recommendations sent a letter to the chairs of the Curriculum, Academic Policy and College Life Committees requesting further revisions outside the scope of its original charge. The committees concurred with that recommendation and requested action by the President.

The President charged the VPAA and academic deans to respond to this request, which entailed a study, not only of the existing governance committees, but also the role of longstanding *ad hoc* committees, expanding the representation of faculty on the committees (to include adding specific slots for faculty with appointments at the Monroe Campus), making reporting lines consistent, and clarifying avenues of communications between the governance committees and the college community. Revisions were made and new By-Laws were formally approved by the Board of Trustees in FA09.

New By-Laws require more faculty members in governance and that faculty from the Monroe Campus be guaranteed seats on these committees. They also recognize the right of the Faculty Senate to submit recommendations to the governance committees. (The Faculty Senate was formed during the 2007-2008 academic year and formally recognized by the Board of Trustees in 2008.)

Longstanding ad hoc committees (such as the TLTR, Diversity Task Force, and Environmental Task Force) have been given status as Standing Committees with rights to move recommendations on to the appropriate Governance Committee. Since these standing committees have an open, self-selecting membership, students are eligible and invited to join them as well.

NCC: *The Board of Trustees should continue to explore the development of more formal assessment policies and procedures to evaluate its own effectiveness.*

In response to this recommendation, the Board notes that it continues to explore ways to assess its own effectiveness. The College already conducts an orientation program that provides detailed information about Northampton and the expectations of trusteeship. In addition, members participate in board development programs offered by the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

## **Standard 5: ADMINISTRATION**

NCC: *The College should continue to assess the work of the non-academic offices in an effort to focus attention on achieving the College's overarching goal of supporting student learning.*

*MST: As part of the need for a comprehensive institutional assessment plan focused on continuous improvement, the team recommends that the college systematically assess and develop improvement plans for all administrative structures and services.*

NCC regularly assesses the work of non-academic and administrative offices to support student learning. Multiple examples are cited in the IEP [5], which encompasses the entire college and includes information concerning assessments in Computer Services, Finance, Administrative Affairs, Student Services, and Institutional Advancement. A recent assessment example from each of these areas is cited below. Additional details can be found in the IEP.

Student Services: NCC's Orientation Committee and OPIR re-designed the student orientation evaluation forms so that the outcomes of and satisfaction with orientation programs at the Main and Monroe Campuses could be assessed. Parents and students who attend orientations complete this survey at the end of every session, yielding a very rich data base (e.g., we have received over 1,800 responses from the SU08 and SU09 orientations). Based on survey results, orientations were modified so that parents could spend time with faculty, scavenger hunts were modified so that they are not so "elementary," and adult students now have orientations designed especially for them at special times. In FA09, NCC began offering 'mini' orientations, which were very successful and will be offered before the start of the SP10 semester. An online student orientation is under development as well. The most recent data available suggest that these orientation sessions increase fall-to-spring retention to 80%.

Computer Services: Instructional Technology (in conjunction with the CTL) recently surveyed all faculty concerning their professional development needs. They found that over 90% of respondents were familiar with CTL/IT services and that 80% participated in their programs at least once a year. Technology training interests included learning management systems, web conferencing systems, and SmartRoom and SmartCart. In terms of technology used on a daily basis, training interests were centered on internal NCC applications. Professional development workshops will be designed for the next several years in these areas. A final question asked about the effectiveness of the CTL/IT in addressing issues of faculty development, with 84% of respondents indicating that it was highly or somewhat effective.

Administrative Services: Human Resources assesses its two-day New Employee Orientation and Northampton 101 sessions each semester (orientations held throughout the academic year). Results have led to modifications in both; modifications to the New Employee Orientation include adding a panel discussion with other newly-hired employees, redesigning the major presentation, and adding additional components on student and academic services. With the Northampton 101 series, additional sessions geared toward new teaching faculty were added and other sessions were collapsed in order to respond to concerns about the number of sessions in the program.

Finance and Operations: The College assesses its financial and operational effectiveness by tracking internal resource usage and by benchmarking college performance against external standards, i.e., those in place at similarly sized two-year colleges. Examples of internal measures that are tracked range from average class size and faculty productivity measures to facility and capital use measures to program and discipline cost data. Kreisher, Miller (NCC's external auditors) have developed financial ratios and standards, which are used as a tool to assess the college's financial health. Key business partners such as Caruso (NCC's health insurance broker) provide helpful resources for assessing the College relative to industry and regional standards. For benchmarking purposes, NCC compares its performance with information in the Pennsylvania Community College Commission Data Base Task Force and it participates in the annual PACCBO (Pennsylvania Association of Community College Business Officers) Comparative Financial Statistics Project. National standards developed by the Association of Higher Education Facility Officers are also used to assess facility costs and operations.

AtD Institutional Research Survey: The Community College Research Center and MDRC conducted a survey of AtD community colleges to determine the level of use of data to improve student success, and a part of this survey included specific questions about the use of IR. At NCC, when faculty need information about groups of students, they most frequently go to IR or other NCC departments – and more of them do so than faculty at other AtD colleges. NCC faculty and staff find the IR staff responsive to their requests, and they are able to find the information they need in a timely fashion – and NCC’s ratings exceed those of AtD colleges in Pennsylvania and of Round 3 AtD colleges.

Institutional Advancement: A Communications Survey was conducted in response to concerns that NCC might be losing its “one-college” feel, especially across our multiple sites. A primary concern was to gain insight on how to address any issues of loss of connectedness so that the college can ensure that all employees feel part of the same organization and part of the same effort. Results showed that employees feel well-informed but less *connected* to others around the college, and steps are being taken to address this concern. IA will continue to use the results of this survey to improve communications throughout the college and its many sites.

The comprehensive plan to continue assessment work in these areas over the course of the next four years can be found in the IEP.

### **Standard 6: INTEGRITY**

NCC: *The College should institute a systematic review of all of NCC policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure that they adequately reflect institutional practice.*

In 2006, a committee compiled all NCC policies and developed a special alphabetical directory housed on a drive accessible to all NCC employees. This is a “one stop shop” for all policies – general College, academic, and student policies. Each policy is a separate document and contains the date it was last reviewed/or updated. In addition, Human Resources (HR) reviewed each policy and developed a chart for reviewing policies on a five-year rotating basis. This process ensures that policies are in line with current practices. Also and as noted in Standard 4, the college approved new Governance By-Laws in FA09.

MST: *The College’s personnel policies mandate that, once hired, each employee have in his/her file an application and an official transcript. The College should review and revise its procedures to ensure that personnel files contain the documents stipulated by the policies.*

Human Resources developed a “new hire” checklist that includes various documents and forms that are critical to employment, such as the application itself and the official transcript for an individual’s terminal degree [12]. In most cases, this documentation is obtained prior to a new employee’s start date; in rare instances when this is not possible (e.g., an employee is hired on a Friday and begins work on the following Monday), HR regularly follows up with the new employee to ensure that needed documentation is received.

NCC: *The College should follow up the Diversity Task Force on the NCC Climate Study by creating a strategic plan for maximizing equity in both recruitment and climate and by improving the participation rate of students of color in this process.*

NCC: *The College should continue to make diversity a priority in its efforts to recruit and retain qualified professional staff.*

Results from the 2003 climate survey were used to develop a five-year strategic plan for the college [13]. This plan contained objectives in five areas (Institutional Commitment; Research & Scholarship; Curriculum and Pedagogy; Recruitment and Retention of Historically Underrepresented

Students, Faculty, and Staff; Inter-group and Intra-group Relations) and college subcommittees were formed to address, implement and monitor activities related to each objective. By FA08, it was felt that the College had fully implemented the plan, and the Diversity Task Force wanted to measure the impact of its initiatives and to obtain a reading of the NCC climate to uncover any new diversity-related issues. A new survey, based on the 2003 survey and on comments from the college community, was administered to over 1,000 NCC students, staff and faculty. The number of students of color participating in this survey nearly doubled over 2003. Results from this survey are being reviewed by the college community and actions to address findings will no doubt begin by SP10.

In terms of recruiting and retaining qualified professional staff, the College stresses the importance of diversity by including this specific language in its position advertisements: “Northampton is strongly committed to increasing the diversity of the college community and the curriculum. Candidates who can contribute to that goal are encouraged to identify their strengths or experiences in this area.”

HR monitors which sources attract the largest number of qualified minority candidates to NCC and uses those avenues (including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Education* and HigherEdJobs.com) for advertising purposes. Additionally, training was developed and implemented for all NCC Search Committee members [14].

That NCC has made recruitment and retention a high priority is evidenced by this data: the number of full-time faculty and staff from under-represented groups increased by 50% over the past five fall semesters:

Table 1: FT Faculty and Staff, FA04 and FA08

	FA04			FA08			Difference FA04-FA08
	Faculty	Staff	Total	Faculty	Staff	Total	
Caucasian	107	258	365	113	297	410	12%
Total Minority	19	33	52	25	53	78	50%

Furthermore, as of FA07, NCC had the second highest percentage of minority full-time faculty and staff in the Lehigh Valley and Monroe County, just behind East Stroudsburg University:

College	% Minority FT Faculty & Staff
East Stroudsburg University	17.6%
Northampton CC	16.5%
PSU - Lehigh Valley	9.0%
Muhlenberg College	8.6%
Moravian College	8.4%
Lehigh University	7.0%
Lehigh Valley College	6.7%
Lafayette College	6.3%
DeSales University	5.4%
Cedar Crest College	3.3%
Lehigh Carbon CC	3.0%

### Standard 7: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

*NCC: The College should implement the Institutional Effectiveness Plan and more fully integrate student learning assessment into it. Additional time and resources should be focused on the assessment of institutional effectiveness.*



*MST: Increased attention must be paid to the assessment of outcomes in non-academic areas, particularly in ways that demonstrate how those outcomes inform decision-making, goal setting and institutional improvement.*

The College’s IEP [5] addresses these two recommendations in detail. At NCC, institutional effectiveness assessment, including academic assessment, and academic support, administrative and community education assessment, occur as outlined in the chart below:

<b><u>INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS</u></b>	
Mission Assessment Indicators of Effectiveness NCCBP CCSSE/CCFSSE	Achieving the Dream Diversity New Student Surveys Alumni Surveys
<b><u>ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT</u></b>	<b><u>ACADEMIC SUPPORT, ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; COMMUNITY ED ASSESSMENT</u></b>
Student Learning Outcomes Committee Student Learning Improvement Conversations General Education Outcomes Assessment Academic Program Audits and Assessment Accredited Program Assessment Related Academic Program Assessment (Library, Learning Center, and Center for Teaching and Learning) Assessing Teaching Effectiveness	Student Services Computer Services Administrative Affairs Institutional Advancement Finance and Operations  Community Education (Non-Credit)

As noted in the IEP and the above chart, NCC assesses its institutional effectiveness every year using a variety of measures, such as its “Indicators of Effectiveness;” results from the NCCBP, CCSSE/CCFSSE and other surveys; and through participation in initiatives such as AtD. These measures and results are fully explained in the IEP.

As also noted in the Plan, NCC assesses student learning outcomes via its Student Learning Outcomes Committee, Student Learning Improvement Conversations, and through program audits and accreditation processes. The GE writing outcome assessment is complete and assessments of scientific and quantitative literacy are in progress. Plans are being laid to assess the GE outcomes for computer literacy and oral communications. Student learning is also assessed in the Library, the Learning Center, Students Services and Community Education, and teaching effectiveness is assessed via student evaluations, classroom observations and other means.

Finally, the Plan includes many details concerning assessment of academic support, administrative and community education activities. This includes assessments of the major NCC divisional units: Student Services, Computer Services, Administrative Affairs, Institutional Advancement and Community Education.

The reader is referred to Section 5 of this report and to the IEP itself for complete details on how these assessments have been used to make decisions, set goals, and institute improvements at NCC.

## **Standard 8: STUDENT ADMISSIONS**

*NCC: The College should improve its pre-enrollment advising career/academic counseling system especially for students interested in selective programs.*

Students must meet specific requirements to enter selective programs at NCC, and attendance at information sessions is required for students to proceed to the next step if they are interested in such programs. For example, prospective nursing students must attend an information session that explains prerequisites, follow-up steps for students to take if they are not accepted into the program of their choice, and the typical academic schedule of an accepted student. Sessions are offered every semester; they were instituted for Radiography and Sonography about two years ago, and sessions for applicants to the Dental Hygiene program began in FA09.

Students who are not admitted into selective programs are enrolled in the General Studies program with an “intent” major. These students are advised on which pre-requisites and general education courses may be taken to strengthen their applications to selective programs. Students who are “General Studies with intent” are assigned an academic advisor who is knowledgeable about their intended program. For some selective programs, program faculty advise “intent” students. For some majors (especially Nursing), students are assigned to other faculty members and advisors who know program requirements.

*NCC: The College should ensure that students have accurate, consistent, updated and timely information in both publications and on the web site including the College Catalog and the student handbook.*

The College ensures accuracy and timeliness of information in all publications through consistent and overlapping procedures. The catalog is reprinted and updated every academic year, with direct involvement from all academic divisions and Student Services. To ensure that there is consistency of information between the printed catalog and the website version, the College replaces all academic program content on the website as an integral final step in the catalog revision process.

The Student Handbook is reprinted and revised annually. For all other promotional material, the Marketing and Publications Department applies the College’s graphic standards and communications policies and procedures. These standards, policies and procedures specify the consistency in color, graphics and logo usage, and assign the Marketing and Publications department with the responsibility for ensuring professional standards in the language and design of our publications.

Essential to every design plan and publications review analysis is the College’s commitment to representing the diversity voiced in the mission statement, strategic plan and vision/values statement. The College is “diverse” in as many ways as that term can be defined. Therefore, careful attention is given to representing that diversity fairly and accurately in the selection of photos in printed promotional material and advertising, and throughout the College’s website.

## **Standard 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

*NCC: The College should ensure comprehensive student support services on both campuses commensurate with enrollment increases. Special attention needs to be paid to services for part time, nontraditional, evening, and distance students. Assessment should focus on orientation, student activities, and student safety.*

Northampton's goal in providing student support services has always been to ensure a comparable experience at all campuses. Services include academic counseling, special assistance for students on academic probation, career counseling, crisis counseling, personal counseling, and substance abuse counseling. In addition, there are ongoing services for program orientation, scheduling/registration, transfer advising and study skills workshops. A survey that asked about advising, library services, student study space, tutoring services, and computers for student use was conducted at NCC's Fowler Center in mid-2009 to determine student priorities on that campus, and a similar survey was recently conducted at the Pocono Corporate Center East location.

Services are frequently customized to serve distinct populations of students. The College initiated a one-week orientation, known as 'Smart Start' for traditional age, at-risk students to help them with the transition to college. Other examples include orientation programs offered for students enrolled in the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Retention, pass rates, and graduation rates in the "Smart Start" programs are higher than those for the general student population.

A number of interactive student support services are offered online. Although they were designed to reach online students, *all* NCC students may access services via this medium, such as students who take classes at remote locations, students who are disabled, or students who are busy and need the flexibility of the programming it offers. Online and part-time students have also been included in the initiative toward comprehensive service. In FA09, the College offered a series of workshops on study strategies, transfer advice, adult student needs, career exploration and advising. NCC has added some flexible advising and registration opportunities for part-time students.

NCC's student orientation program has grown at the same pace as our enrollment. Prior to SU09, the College hosted seven orientations at Bethlehem and four at Monroe. But in the summer of 2009, the College increased those sessions to seven in Bethlehem and six at Monroe. Beginning in early June, and throughout the summer months, the College offered afternoon and evening orientations for nontraditional and part-time students twice a week at each campus. Student orientation at NCC is an organic process: the program has been modified over the past few years as a result of evaluations completed by attending students and their families, and based on recommendations from the First Year Experience Task Force. For example, per assessments, NCC added afternoon orientations, altered the "student services" part of the program (e.g., increased time spent on Spartan Net), and modified parent workshops.

In 2008-2009, almost 2,600 students (unduplicated), or 17% of our student population, took developmental courses. Last year the College adopted a more intrusive plan to reach students who test into developmental courses: in the past, these students would leave testing and later be invited to register. Now, a staff member meets with students immediately following testing to discuss placement test results and the impact that results will have on their selected major, and to begin to make an appropriate academic plan.

The College has added staff in enrollment and support services, but additions have not kept pace with the rapid enrollment growth. In 2009, the College approved three new full-time positions in Advising and Counseling, but they are currently frozen due to the state budget crisis.

As Northampton's student diversity has expanded, the College has adjusted its student life program to more accurately reflect the diversity of our students and to meet identified needs. For example, during the 2008-2009 academic year, a program known as *Cultural Connections* was offered to African American students living in the residence halls. Other special interest workshops were made available by the counseling staff and student clubs and organizations to other students of color, financially disadvantaged students, veterans, gay and lesbian students, women, student senators and others. Leadership opportunities, early intervention initiatives and cultural activities for diverse student groups

were also offered. Student attendance in these activities has frequently been at capacity and the programs have been evaluated as “outstanding” in many instances.

In a similar vein, clubs and organizations have grown as student needs evolved and emerged. NCC is one of the 32% of institutions with services for military veterans that has a club for these students – NCC’s “Band of Brothers” Club, which, despite the name, welcomes women veterans as well. In 2007, the College initiated a “Safe Space” program for gay and lesbian students; training for this program was assessed in early 2009. NCC regularly hosts a “Transition Expos” for college-bound high school students with disabilities, along with their high school teachers and guidance counselors, or special support staff and/or parents. This too is assessed annually.

Campus safety has improved greatly since the Middle States team visit in 2005. The College has increased staffing and added full time security personnel to all three primary sites. In addition, it has instituted an emergency text message alert system for all students, and in 2007 it improved the lighting in parking lots and added security cameras at a cost of almost one million dollars. A student safety task force met in 2007 to make recommendations to the College’s emergency planning system, and in 2009 we received a \$300,000 federal grant to upgrade our radio communication system. Health issues are also addressed; for example, NCC recently distributed information concerning swine flu to all students, faculty and staff.

*NCC: The College should carefully assess the balance between printed materials and online information so that information that students need is easily accessible.*

Communicating the availability of the College’s services requires vigilance and persistence in identifying and creating the most effective vehicles to reach and engage students. Traditional brochures, flyers and other printed materials continue to describe services and activities. But – and not surprisingly - print media use by prospective students has declined over the past several years in favor of the website. In particular, decline in use of the print catalog among adults 23 and older has been significant. Adults are now opting for the NCC website as their primary source of information about the College. The Marketing Department works consistently to improve the site in order to make finding information easier. A full redesign was rolled out in August, 2009.

Student surveys from FA07 (the most recent survey) show that the internet/NCC Website reached its highest ever reported use as a “major” information source about the College. Nearly nine in ten new students rated the website as “good” or “very good.” The most frequent comment made by students was “easy to use/navigate.” NCC participated in the 2009 CCSSE, which this year asked about the use of social networking tools among students. About 40% of NCC students use these tools to communicate with other students, instructors, or college staff about their coursework. Also, *a much higher* percent of NCC students are likely to use course management systems.

Given these percentages, the College is now providing more information via the web, including YouTube, Facebook and other social media. As an example, NCC decided to create a “PSA Contest” to familiarize students with its new smoking policy (instituted in FA09); the winning entry was posted on NCC’s YouTube channel and the College’s news site.

During this growing shift to electronic media, the College is always aware that some of our students and other constituents do not yet have easy access to the internet. Therefore, we remain careful to ensure that the College continues to print important information that must be seen by current and prospective students and other members of the community.

## **Standard 10: FACULTY**

*NCC: The College should continue the recent vigorous expansion of the full-time faculty to assure that they teach at least half of the sections at the Main Campus. Maintain the upward trend in the percentage of sections taught by full-time faculty at the Monroe Campus to where the Monroe Campus equals the college average of percentage of sections taught by full-time faculty.*

Instructional Credit Hours (ICHs) are NCC's version of teaching credit hours. The College's stated goal is to have 50% of ICHs taught by full-time faculty. However, as noted throughout this report, student enrollment has dramatically increased over the past few years, which has led to the increasing use of adjunct faculty. As a result, the desired 50/50 ratio has fallen short. In FA09, for example, it was about 40/60 at the Bethlehem campus and 34/66 at Monroe, for a campus-wide ratio of 39/61. Likewise, enrollments in Online Learning courses have also grown dramatically over the past five years and, if online ICHs are included, the campus-wide ratio reaches 35/65. Nonetheless, NCC remains committed to 50/50 as a staffing goal.

The atypically slow response in filling new faculty lines as enrollment expanded has been attributed to the economic downturn. Academic deans report fewer out-of-area applicants and several faculty searches have failed to identify a successful candidate the first time out. For example, by FA09, NCC had already been through three unsuccessful searches to fill a psychology line, and other searches have been extended beyond the original timeframe. However, the College has filled 2009-2010 positions in English (2), mathematics, biology and chemistry. Since 2005, the College has added 22 full time faculty members in response to the growing student enrollment, an increase of 17%.

*NCC: The College should explore ways to interest and attract full-time faculty to distance learning courses.*

In 2005, only 15 full-time faculty members taught an online course. By SP09, that number had risen to 36, which represented a 140% increase. While the Office of Online Learning and the academic deans encourage full-time faculty to teach a course online, the enthusiasm for it has been largely generated by the faculty themselves. Faculty who taught online in 2005 or earlier shared their positive experiences with colleagues, a trend that has increased faculty acceptance of online as a comparable delivery system. Faculty members report that they enjoy the flexibility to teach a course without having to come to campus, while others see online instruction as the future and want to add online instruction to their teaching repertoire at NCC.

*NCC: The College should consider additional strategies, including providing adequate office space and support, to facilitate the ongoing hiring and retention of high quality adjunct faculty.*

At NCC, adjuncts are afforded office space to meet students, keep materials before and after class, and to meet with other faculty members. In some instances, this office space is adjacent to full-time faculty offices.

In 2007, the College appointed a second Assistant Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences (the division with the largest number of adjunct faculty) to recruit and retain qualified adjuncts. The two assistant deans have 'divided' the workload of managing about 125 adjuncts per semester. Collectively, the Assistant Deans (two in HSS and one in Business and Technology) organize and conduct orientation sessions for adjuncts and act as both contacts and liaisons with the academic clusters or programs to which they are attached. In addition, several academic program areas, and the Monroe Campus, have appointed full-time faculty as coordinators who work with the adjuncts in their programs or clusters.

Given the shortage of office space available at both sites, this remains a less than ideal option for some adjuncts, but is likely to remain the same for the foreseeable future.

*NCC: The College should ensure that appropriate policies regarding faculty are uniform and clearly communicated and included in faculty handbooks.*

The College publishes a Faculty Handbook and Adjunct Faculty Handbook each year. The Faculty Handbook is edited each year by the Office of Academic Affairs following revisions and updates made by the four academic divisions, the Student Services division, and all offices reporting to the VPAA.

*NCC: The College should explore ways to improve the evaluation of, communication with, and the integration of adjunct faculty and distance learning faculty.*

*NCC: The College should support and encourage faculty to evaluate (and possibly replace) the current student evaluation instrument and to assess the effectiveness of their teaching and professional development using additional methods and/or instruments.*

*MST: The College should improve and expand the methods that are used to assess the teaching effectiveness of all faculty: full-time, adjunct, and distance learning.*

Ongoing evaluation of faculty remains a priority at NCC. Since the instruments and methods of faculty evaluation are included in the collective bargaining agreement, faculty members and the faculty union are included in all discussion on those areas.

Most Northampton full- and part-time faculty administer the Oklahoma Instructor Rating Questionnaire (IRQ) in both long and short forms. As reported in the 2005 self-study and visiting team reports, concern was expressed by the faculty and administration about the adequacy of this instrument. In early 2007, NCC hosted a professional development day focusing on the IDEA student evaluation instrument, and faculty members were encouraged to consider adding IDEA student evaluation forms to their portfolio. The number of faculty using the IDEA form expanded from eight in SP05 to 29 in SP09. The short version of the IRQ, while still used by the majority of faculty members, was discussed in 2006 by a committee representing the administration and the faculty union, but no revision took place.

All faculty who teach online are similarly required to submit student evaluations for their online courses. While full-time faculty have the choice of instruments afforded in the collective bargaining agreement, part-time faculty must use a course evaluation form designed by the Office of Online Learning. As at most colleges, below-average student response rates to course evaluations in online courses is a concern of those who teach such courses and this issue is being addressed.

Since 2007, when full- or part-time faculty agree to teach an online course for the first time, they are required to complete a six-week online training session facilitated by the Assistant Director of Online Learning. They must also complete self-paced training on how to use Blackboard, the College's online course management system. And, faculty members charged with developing hybrid or blended learning courses are required to complete a three-week online training session to help them develop courses which reflect the instructional design standards of the Quality Matters rubric.

A committee of faculty and deans recently developed a new rubric for class observation of faculty. After it was developed, the observers compared their observations to determine what areas needed attention and which did not. Observers are continuing to "norm" their instrument and also continue to examine areas of need to see what might be required in terms of professional training. Areas that are seen as needing attention include the links between course learning outcomes and class topics,

daily class goals and course outcomes, use of instructional resources, the level of student involvement in the class, and class period assessments.

All faculty members are evaluated annually. Initial appointment faculty must submit student evaluation forms for all courses taught, while those on standard appointment (tenured faculty) must submit student evaluations for 50% of the sections taught for the calendar year.

*NCC: The College should continue with its current strategies and methods of faculty development, specifically with the emphasis on individual faculty-designed professional development plans and/or programs offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning.*

Ongoing professional development of faculty, both full-time and part-time, has long been a priority for Northampton. Contractually, faculty and administrators schedule five days per academic year to be devoted to development activities. These include the “Opening Days” scheduled at the beginning of the academic year and then again in January before the spring semester. Additional Professional Staff meetings are scheduled twice per semester with programs and presentations of interest to faculty members.

The CTL conducts an ongoing program of workshops, funded projects, and fellowships and training built around major topics like assessment of student learning and effective pedagogical strategies. Based on attendance, faculty are very interested in these workshops: 515 full-time faculty and 486 adjuncts attended workshops in 2008-2009.

Opportunities for full-time faculty members include Foundation-grant-funded “Faculty Innovation Grants” awarded to applicants who wish to pilot or demonstrate innovative teaching practices that enhance student learning. Projects are diverse and have included Critical Thinking, Teaching Diversity, Blackboard Pedagogy, Project-Based Pedagogy, The Research Process in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and Nurturing the Self. One notable project involved the use of electronic polling units or “clickers,” which enable students to respond instantly to the instructor’s questions, thereby signaling which concepts or formulas are being learned or not while protecting the students’ confidentiality. Another project, funded for FA09, will enable NCC students to interact via the internet with students from a comparable class at a Navajo community college in Arizona.

Several programs for part-time faculty are offered annually. Adjunct faculty members attend an evening of orientation at the beginning of each semester. In addition, part-time faculty are invited to, and attend in good numbers, a “Super Saturday” professional development conference, offered once per semester on the Bethlehem and Monroe campuses. What makes these all-day conferences especially beneficial is not only the nature and scope of the workshops on a variety of issues, but the fact that many are facilitated or directed by full-time faculty members.

For the past 15 years, NCC has offered a “Summer Institute for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning” at the conclusion of each academic year. Expert scholars or practitioners in assessment, pedagogy, or curriculum design are invited to share their expertise with select (usually 40-50) faculty members in a collegial and informal environment. The project is conducted by the CTL and evaluations suggest that faculty members appreciate the give-and-take with experts in those fields. Recent workshops have focused on Cooperative Learning, the Brain’s Physiology in Learning, Assessing General Education Outcomes, and Overcoming Student Apathy in the Classroom.

**Standard 11: EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS**  
**Standard 13: RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

*NCC: The College should carefully monitor technology programs in between program audits to ensure that they remain up to date.*

In 2007, the Business and Technology divisional dean formed a Technology Advisory Committee, composed primarily of representatives from industries related to the technology programs. This meets semiannually and monitors the outcomes and quality of the programs on a continuing basis, providing feedback between five-year program audits. In addition, cluster faculty now place greater importance on the feedback in each audit from the external evaluator, also an industry specialist. The external evaluator's evaluation includes statements on program viability, recommendations for improvement and other operational aspects of the program.

*NCC: The College should strongly support and grow the distance learning program while insisting on comparable course design, course delivery, and course assessment. On-line faculty and courses need to be integrated with the academic divisions to ensure consistency. This integration must include faculty supervision and evaluation.*

In 2008-2009, Northampton celebrated ten years of Distance Education. Shortly thereafter, reflecting the reality of advanced technology and the medium of delivery, the Office of Distance Education changed its name to the Office of Online Learning.

Enrollment in online courses has grown substantially. During the FA05 semester, 1,835 students enrolled in at least one online course, compared to 3,202 in FA09 – a 74% increase in five years. Online learning now accounts for at least 15% of the College's enrollment in any given semester. For the 2008-2009 academic year, nearly 28% of all NCC students took at least one course online.

The College has been steadfast from the outset that learning outcomes of online course sections be identical to those of traditional sections. To ensure consistency and comparable quality, all instructors use the course outline approved by the Curriculum Committee. In addition, the Director of Online Learning has procedures in place to update course content when new textbooks or textbook editions are chosen for on-campus courses. Individual syllabi (unique to each section as per instructor) are reviewed prior to the beginning of each semester to ensure they reflect the current term and are available to students.

Online sections taught by both full- and part-time faculty members are evaluated by students in the same way as traditional courses, except for the use of an online course evaluation system. As online learning becomes more popular among students, more full-time faculty are interested in trying their hand at it. During the 2008-2009 academic year, 37 full-time faculty taught at least one online section.

Online Learning is overseen by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the academic deans. The deans approve requests by full-time faculty who wish to teach these courses, and those approvals are forwarded to the Office of Online Learning. Full-time and adjunct faculty are required to successfully complete a six-week online course on best practices in online teaching before they can teach their first online course. NCC recognizes that faculty who are effective in traditional courses may not be as effective in an online medium. In these rare instances, the deans discourage or even disapprove future requests to teach online from these faculty members.

As online learning at Northampton continues to grow, more courses are added to the online schedule. In every instance, new online courses are approved by the academic clusters (NCC's version of



departments) before they are initially offered. Once the course is approved, the College makes every effort to provide a comparable level of learning support and other academic and student services to online students.

*NCC: The College should enhance support services (tutoring, advising, counseling, etc) for distance students.*

In FA07, the College purchased a license for Elluminate Live, a web conferencing tool that makes available online tutoring across a broad variety of courses. In addition, the Office of Online Learning, Career Services, Counseling Services, and Academic Advising and Transfer Services have used Elluminate Live to host several online meetings and workshops. The usefulness of sessions is illustrated by the numbers: from 2007 to 2008, the number of Elluminate Live sessions increased from 182 to 233 and the number of online learners who attended such sessions increased from 422 to 1,365.

## **Standard 12: GENERAL EDUCATION**

*NCC: The College should undertake a re-examination of the GE core. As part of that examination, the inclusion of information literacy, social justice, civic/community engagement as well as other possibilities should be explored. In addition, a formal information literacy program with an assessment component to evaluate learning outcomes should be developed.*

*NCC: The College should enhance information to students and faculty about the requirements and importance of the GE core and more systematically assess the understanding of the GE core and its effectiveness.*

*MST: A set of learning outcomes for General Education should be developed, and those learning outcomes should be systematically assessed in relation to the mission and strategic plan of the college.*

Per these recommendations, a 14-member group of faculty members and academic staff from all academic areas reviewed GE core outcomes. This committee revised existing GE core outcomes and, by SP08, it had arrived at new language for new outcomes. New GE outcomes were approved for Arts and Humanities, Social Science, Science, Communication, Computer Literacy and Quantitative Literacy, and new requirements were developed for AA, AS and AAS degrees. Outcomes are now in a consistent format; outcomes convey the purpose of the GE core curriculum to students, the NCC community, and the general public; and outcomes have clear learning goals and allow for their assessments. New student learning outcomes for Information Literacy were developed and approved in SP09 for implementation in FA09. All outcomes are available in the college catalog, both in print and online.

Having developed new GE learning outcomes, the next step was to develop assessment procedures and plans. The GE Core Outcomes Review Committee worked closely with the SLOC, beginning with the assessment of the writing portion of the GE communication outcome. In 2009-2010, both quantitative literacy and science are being assessed under the auspices of the SLOC. The GE Committee is also working on various aspects of the Information Literacy, Diversity/Global Awareness, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving outcomes, and providing input on NCC's alumni survey to provide an indirect assessment of these GE outcomes.

NCC also assesses its General Education outcomes indirectly via CCSSE and alumni survey items. Results reveal that the college contributes a great deal to student acquisition of college-level proficiency in terms of general education knowledge and skills, and that 98% of graduates achieve their educational objectives in full or in part.

## Standard 14: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

NCC's plan for the assessment of student learning is multi-faceted, with centralized and decentralized components. The foundational components of academic assessment are the Student Learning Outcomes Committee (SLOC) and the General Education Core Outcomes Review Committee, both recently approved by the Board of Trustees as standing committees within the College's governance system. The SLOC is responsible for program and course assessment and, in collaboration with the General Education Core Outcomes Review Committee, for the assessment of competencies associated with the College's core requirements. Details of SLOC activities are further documented in section five of this report. Student Learning Improvement Conversations (SLIC) were initiated in SP09 to facilitate faculty conversations centered on student learning, i.e., to allow faculty to identify their student learning issues and to promote problem solving at the course and class level. The goal is to sustain faculty conversations throughout the 2009-2010 academic year to improve student success, retention and, eventually, graduation rates.

On a decentralized level, the requirements for academic audits (done every five years) have been revised to include the assessment of student learning as a required exercise. Similarly, as is typical for programs leading to certification or licensure, several programs in the health sciences, education and business also do course and program assessment as part of their accreditation requirements. Finally, the Center for Teaching and Learning routinely conducts workshops and other training for classroom assessment techniques over and above those enumerated here.

*NCC: The College needs additional assessment coordination to bring the resources of the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Planning and Institutional Research together to work with the faculty and the administration.*

The College's IEP [5] addresses these two recommendations in detail. Briefly, the CTL and the OPIR have worked and continue to work together on a number of projects. For example, the College's work on the AtD initiative have led to close cooperation between the two offices as they seek to assess student learning outcomes in developmental and gateway courses. They also work closely to develop, administer and analyze results from faculty surveys on professional development needs. And they jointly address assessment needs related to the College's Student Learning Outcomes Committee and the Developmental Education Task Force, among others.

*NCC: The College should ensure that assessment of student learning has a prominent place in collection of data for program audits.*

An enhanced effort to ensure the prominence of assessment in program audits has begun as well and will continue into the future. As noted in the IEP, recent actions include the following:

- Communication Design uses standardized evaluations with rubrics for student portfolios in the program's capstone course
- Fine Art includes a student exhibition to assess student performance; a digital *Portfolio Presentation* and an *Artist Talk* are required from each student and are used in course and program evaluation
- Journalism mapped its outcomes to individual course learning outcomes and is revising course outlines and associated learning outcomes
- Special Education revised its outcomes and mapped them to individual course learning outcomes; it is examining student artifacts and evidence of student learning within each course

- Library Technical Assistant course outlines were rewritten to incorporate learning outcomes and assessment; rubrics and specific assessment strategies are being addressed in FA09.

The College recently modified one position to create a new position within the OPIR - the Director of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness - with the responsibility to provide increased support for assessment at all levels of the college, including at the program audit level.

*NCC: The College should promote partnerships among faculty for the consistent assessment of outcomes among sections of a single course and ensure consistent use of student outcomes and consistent correlation of outcomes with assessment techniques in every syllabus.*

The College's work with AtD has led to progress in this area, especially in its developmental math courses. Partnerships among math faculty have been especially strong: in FA07, faculty in Elementary Algebra (MATH022) began using common exam questions to assess student learning outcomes and this continues into 2009-2010. In SU09, a Professional Learning Committee for math instructors was created, as was one for instructors of developmental reading, English, and counseling (COUN150) faculty. After professional development sessions in SU09, instructors agreed on a set of common academic skills to emphasize across all sections and disciplines.

Students in developmental reading and English courses are subject to a common first-day assessment in their courses to confirm placement. Additionally, common exit criteria are used in these courses, along with a common rubric. New developmental English courses will be offered in SP10, and they will also have a common first-day assessment and exit criteria.

The SLOC promotes common assessments among sections of single courses; e.g., students in Financial Accounting I (ACCT101) are now subject to common exams and World Geography (GEOG101) uses common map final exams. Findings from GE outcome assessments may prompt further use of common assessment methods in courses.

*NCC: The College should ensure that assessment of community education proceeds in tandem with assessment of credit programs.*

As outlined in the IEP, assessment of community education is an integral part of the assessment at the College and proceeds in tandem with credit programs. Community Education at NCC covers a broad swath: it ranges from Adult Literacy to the National Training Center for Microelectronics. Assessment within these programs occurs through process improvements, customer satisfaction, and program evaluation:

	Process Improvement	Customer Satisfaction	Program Evaluation
Adult Literacy & Basic Workforce Development	X		X
Leadership Development Institute	X	X	X
Contracted Training		X	
Learning Connection		X	
EMS Non-Credit		X	X
Center for Healthcare Education*			X
Computer Training		X	

\*Includes RN/LPN Reactivation, Home Health Aide, Nursing Assistant, Phlebotomy Certificate, and Pharmacy Technician Programs

For example, process improvements include streamlining processing time for class registrations. Customer satisfaction and program evaluation are usually conducted through surveys asking about program relevance, learning, instructional methods, and delivery of materials (e.g., f:\jhirt\institutional assessment\computer training survey 2009.doc). In some cases, assessments are based on the demonstration of skill sets as well (e.g., contracted training) or on criteria laid out in grants (e.g., Adult Literacy and ESL).

Center for Healthcare Education assessments include program evaluations, clinical competencies, theory competencies, clinical facility evaluations, preceptor evaluations; these are done for each course, with results regularly reviewed and actions taken if necessary based on the data collected. EMT and First Responder courses both have program and statewide assessments. Students take written examinations (program and statewide) and also perform practical skills (program and statewide) in order to be credentialed. Pass rates on these exams are monitored and formative assessments of student learning are monitored throughout the course; tutoring is infused based on student needs.

As Trudy Banta has noted, delivering non-credit community courses and programs and continuing education credit are important components of community college missions – and - as she put it ‘sheer survival is a sure indicator of the effectiveness of non-credit and continuing education courses and programs.’ (Banta, T.W. (1999). *Assessment in community colleges: Setting the standard for higher education?* Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems). At NCC, the financials of Community Education are of critical importance in assessing its viability, especially in these difficult economic times. Monitoring student migration from non-credit to credit programs and asking students whether they met their goals are other useful tools. This is an issue that the College is addressing; while it is certainly true that not all non-credit students want to make the leap to credit, some certainly do – and the College would like to assist them in this effort.

*MST: A culture of assessment needs to be firmly established throughout the institution; therefore, the team strongly recommends that attention be paid to preparing existing personnel to become and hiring new personnel who are knowledgeable in and committed to student learning outcomes assessment, particularly in the use of the results for continuous improvement of educational programs and services.*

NCC actively promotes the culture of assessment and the concomitant culture of evidence within faculty, staff, and students. As noted in the IEP, in the feedback letter dated July 6, 2009 that the College received in response to its 2008-2009 AtD activities, MDC was encouraged by several aspects of assessment and the use of data at NCC:

- *“Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Service: The use of disaggregated, longitudinal data in institutional decision-making. The use of data to redesign programs and dismantle unsuccessful pilots is particularly impressive.”*
- *“Systemic Institutional Improvement: The growing culture of evidence at your institution and the new administrative or staff positions you have created to enhance the culture of evidence or improve student success.”*

Further evidence is provided in a recent Community College Research Center (based at Columbia University’s Teachers College) report entitled “Achieving the Dream Colleges in Pennsylvania and Washington State: Early Progress Toward Building a Culture of Evidence” by Davis Jenkins, Todd Ellwein, John Wachen, Monica Reid Kerrigan, and Sung-Woo Cho (March, 2009), which outlines the progress that has been made in all Pennsylvania community colleges, including NCC [<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=679>].

As also noted in the IEP, the CTL has an extensive history of offering assessment and assessment-related workshops for faculty and staff, and the OPIR serves as a strong promoter and active participant in assessment projects throughout the College.

Furthermore, all advertisements for teaching faculty and pertinent administrative positions indicate that an understanding and use of assessment practices is necessary. Hiring committees ask potential hires about their experience with assessment; for example, Student Affairs professionals are asked about how they know that their services meet student needs and contribute to their learning. In Education and Academic Success, candidates are asked about their knowledge and experiences with assessment (at the student, classroom, course, departmental and program level). The College recently prepared and now uses a new faculty "Classroom Observation Form" and rubric that embed assessment of student learning in classroom observations. Tracking the faculty observation results in the aggregate helps academic administrators, in conjunction with the CTL, to determine professional training needs vis-a-vis assessment.

### **Section 3: Challenges and Opportunities**

Northampton Community College organizes its goals and operations around three strategic initiatives – access, engagement and excellence. NCC revisited these themes for the development of its new Strategic Plan for 2009-2014; they were reaffirmed by stakeholders and will guide the College's planning and operational priorities over the next five years as well (Standard 1).

Since 2005, NCC has been active in responding to the recommendations made by the self-study and visiting team. At the same time, the College has charted a future course that includes both a strategic vision and an institutional commitment to create meaningful educational opportunities amidst unprecedented economic and societal changes. Topics that relate to the standards for accreditation are noted parenthetically throughout this section.

#### Opportunities

If a single word were used to characterize Northampton's opportunities (and challenges) over the past five years, it would be "growth." Overall, the College's growth has created exceptional opportunities. Since its inception, NCC has nurtured an institutional culture of innovation and calculated risk to keep it among the leaders in academic innovation and quality in the region and beyond. That culture, coupled with the phenomenal growth over the past few years, has required strategic vision, opportunistic leadership, and rapid response to community needs.

This collegiate culture has resulted in some coups and breakthroughs in the community college sector, including the awarding of an \$850,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2008, the only such award made to a community college that year, and one that will enable NCC to provide curricular enrichment in the Humanities and professional development for the faculty on a scale never realized in the College's history. In October, 2009, the College was awarded a FIPSE grant to develop and implement an online immersion experience for developmental math students. The grant total for three years may exceed \$500,000 (Standard 3).

The sustained pattern of enrollment growth in headcount and FTEs has mirrored that of other community colleges in the wake of the economic downturn beginning in 2008, but the recession accounts for only a part of the story. A new campus in the heart of South Side Bethlehem, new programs in marketable fields, the growing popularity of online learning, the College's continuing reputation for academic quality and affordability, and an organizational culture of entrepreneurship and innovation all continue to play a role in the pattern of growth and comparative prosperity (Standard 3).

In 2005, the College opened the Fowler Family Southside Center. To date, 100,000 square feet have been renovated into state-of-the-art classrooms, computer labs, and conference space and offices. From its opening in 2005, 168 credit classes have run, with more than 3,500 student registrations. In the 2008-2009 academic year, 803 credit students took courses solely at the Fowler Center. The Center also provides literacy and job training for about 5,000 non-credit students. Given the Center's location and economically disadvantaged population, the job training and literacy programs are both necessary and conveniently located (Standards 3 and 8).

The Fowler Family Center is located in the heart of a massive revitalization project, which includes the new \$800 million Sands Casino and Resort. NCC has been an active partner with Sands in providing job training for new employees in the culinary, hospitality and management sectors of the operation. Table games were legislatively approved in 2009, and NCC is providing training in those areas for about 500 new potential casino employees.

As a key provider of educational services in the Lehigh Valley and Monroe County, the College intentionally blurs the line between "community" and "college." To strengthen its commitment to community engagement, it sponsored a tuition-free program for unemployed residents during the 2008-09 recession, and in October, 2009, it received a grant of nearly \$80,000 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide classes, career advising and other services to local unemployed workers (Standard 1).

NCC consistently strives to ensure that our commitment to access is maintained. Sixty-six new full-time faculty and staff have been added to the College's payroll in the last five years. New faculty have brought new ideas on pedagogy, technological expertise, currency in their disciplines and other refreshing and revitalizing changes to the College. While a sizeable portion of the faculty heads to retirement in the next few years, nearly 35% of the total faculty has been at the College five years or less. In that sense, the surge in enrollment has partially addressed the succession issue on the faculty level. In that same spirit, the College initiated the President's Leadership Institute in 2008-2009 as a means to enhance personal skills and competencies necessary to lead in a community college setting and position those faculty and staff to extend their careers at NCC (Standards 9 and 10).

Given the recommendations in the self-study and visiting team report, Northampton has vigorously embraced a culture of assessment, both for institutional effectiveness (Standard 7) and the assessment of student learning (Standard 14). The Institutional Effectiveness Plan is the principal repository of the college's assessment planning and activities. Assessment has been refined through NCC's status as an Achieving the Dream (AtD) college. Our participation has committed us to evidence-based decision making, which has underscored and reinforced the assessment movement here. In addition, the College's participation in AtD has led to the initiation of a Developmental Education Task Force (now the Developmental Education Committee), a First Year Experience Task Force, the African American Male Retention Initiative and other programs and services aimed at improving the prospects for student success (Standard 4). A pivotal priority for the next five years will be converting the College's offerings in developmental education and enhancing and organizing them into an outstanding "program" of developmental education.

In July, 2009, NCC added a new academic division, Education and Academic Success, charged in part with overseeing developmental education offerings and creating a more structured, integrated and programmatic approach to what the College offers. In light of the literature on what works in developmental education, that division will seek greater coordination and cross-divisional planning in developmental education (Standards 9 and 11).

NCC also participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) (Standard 7). With regard to the assessment of student learning, Northampton's plan includes a Student Learning Outcomes Committee (SLOC), Student Learning Improvement Conversations (SLIC), and a General Education Core Outcomes Review Committee. The General Education outcomes were comprehensively reviewed and revised over a period of two years, and assessments of science and quantitative literacy outcomes are underway (Standard 14).

NCC is committed to emerging learning modalities and delivery systems. Online Learning has emerged as a growing and preferred setting for many students. While some external factors played a role in this growth, e.g. more students working while attending college and the dramatic increase in gasoline prices in the latter half of the decade, it is clear that Online Learning is successful because of comparable course outcomes with "on-ground" courses and the convenience and facility of learning that it provides. As students grow more comfortable communicating online and as courses are added online and in hybrid formats, NCC projects continuing growth for the online format. In FA09, Northampton began plans to expand online courses, programs and services. This growth plan will begin formally through an expanded schedule of "hybrid" courses in SP10 (Standards 11 and 13).

Dual Enrollment with area high schools, made possible by state legislation in 2006, has also expanded opportunities of access to NCC by high school junior and seniors. The program allows qualified students to take 'academic' (as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act) courses on the campus in regularly scheduled college classes. Based on grading patterns and feedback from faculty, the program has been successful in giving high school students an early start on their college program. Since 2006, the College has been serving more than 500 students per year through dual enrollment. As this is being written, the state budget for 2010 has reduced the funding for dual enrollment, but the college will continue this successful program for the foreseeable future (Standards 11, 12, and 13).

### Challenges

If "growth" is a running theme that characterizes NCC's opportunities over the next few years, it is also a major factor in addressing the challenges of that period as well. The most illustrative example of that factor is the plan to construct a new Monroe Campus. Northampton initially offered courses in Monroe County in 1988 - today the Monroe campus serves over 2,500 students and is only one of two higher education institutions in that region (Standard 3).

Northampton's Board of Trustees announced its intent to support the construction of a new and expanded campus in December, 2005, and a 71 acre parcel of land (one mile from the original campus) was purchased in February, 2006. Building plans have been approved and groundbreaking may occur during the FA10 semester (Standard 3).

Dramatic growth has also resulted in the College reevaluating its automated infrastructures. NCC's self-perception and its approach to students have been modeled as that of a small college, cultivating a personal relationship among faculty, staff and students. With enrollment over 11,000 for 2009-2010, that philosophy remains a widespread practice. However, a considerable challenge will be to match that small college service with the systems and management required of a much larger institution. In 2009, NCC undertook a systematic analysis of its automated processes with the aim of making service to students and staff more efficient and timely. The College is investigating academic and commercial software packages to improve its processes in admissions, finance, human resources, and other basic operations (Standard 8).

Program development in times of financial uncertainty underscores the importance of employment opportunities and economic development, both vital components of our mission. While local unemployment remains relatively high, the College is exploring programs in “green” technologies, such as wind turbines, photovoltaic generation and other disciplines essential to sustainability (Standard 11).

In addition to weathering the national economic downturn, NCC was subjected to a state budget impasse resulting from a deficit of almost \$3 billion for fiscal 2010, and a subsequent legislative budget stalemate that extended from July 2009 through September 2009. The impasse had deleterious effects on community college funding and key programs in student retention and support, and the resulting cutbacks have made a “new normal” difficult to ascertain. Community Education, which serves thousands of Lehigh Valley residents through critical Literacy and Adult Education, training, and employment-related programs, was severely and adversely affected through a drop in federal and state funding (Standards 3 and 13). Finally, the Northampton Community College Foundation, which has supported faculty development and student financial aid through the College endowment, has had to cut back its transfers due to decline in both income and market value of those endowment funds.

As this report is being written, there are some signs of economic recovery on the horizon. The downturn is partially responsible for the dramatic growth experienced at NCC. While the College, through increased enrollment, is an ironic beneficiary of this economic distress, the severity of the recession has adversely affected the economic status of our students, funding sources and regional economy. Job placements for graduates in reliably employable fields such as Automotive Technology and Nursing are now more uncertain.

Since the recession began, NCC has exercised restraint and prudence in discretionary spending. For example, 25% of the institutional travel budget has been redirected to help increase student financial aid. Several existing positions in Community Education have been eliminated because of state funding cuts, impacting long-time employees. New position requests for faculty lines are screened even more carefully, and commitments to sponsorship of community events have been dramatically pared.

Compared to the overall economy, and to other sectors of higher education, NCC remains in an enviable place. In that spirit, and with a steadfast commitment to our mission, it will weather this recession safely. Vigilance and stewardship, coupled with an ongoing concern for the welfare of our students, will guide the College through these perilous times.

#### **Section 4: Enrollment and Finance Trends and Projections**

NCC maintains focused and responsible stewardship of its finances, basing allocation decisions on strategic planning and forecasting. This section presents the college’s enrollment and finance trends and projections from 2005 to 2013 to illustrate how the institution uses enrollment, finance and outcomes data to make decisions regarding programming. As the institution continues to become more data driven, campus decision-makers require more precise and timely information.

NCC carefully monitors demographic trends, enrollments, and its finances to anticipate future needs and to make efficient use of its resources, thereby enabling it to serve the educational and workforce needs of the region. The Office of Planning and Institutional Research actively scans national and regional trends to ensure that NCC plans for demographic changes and enrollment trends.

Financial trends and projections are based on the history of funding from three major sources: tuition and fees, the State of Pennsylvania, and the eight local school districts that are located in Northampton County and that act as the local sponsors. Funding from sponsoring school districts and the



state over the years has been dependable but has not kept pace with the growth of the college. The original concept of obtaining one-third of our funding from each of the three components has changed over the years; we now get about 51% from student tuition and fees, 26% from state appropriations, and 8% from sponsoring school districts.

Enrollment and financial trends and projections are presented in detail below.

### **Enrollment Trends**

Various local trends have influenced the growth of credit and noncredit enrollments at NCC. Due to relatively low housing costs in the Lehigh Valley (compared to the nearby metropolitan areas of Philadelphia and New York), population growth over the past ten years has been significant and unemployment has been relatively low. Now, however, this growth is abating somewhat. With the slumping economy, with companies downsizing, and with employees looking to enhance their skills at an affordable cost, NCC is experiencing higher-than-normal enrollment growth. And, as at the national level, NCC is experiencing an increase in the number of students graduating from the local high schools who are choosing NCC as their initial start for their college activities.

Credit head enrollment increased by 28% over the past five years (8,754 in FA05 to 11,218 in FA09), and FTEs were up 36% (6,080 in FA05 to 8,287 in FA09). SP09 head enrollment was higher than that for FA08 – a first at NCC – and FA09 head enrollment exceeded that of both FA08 and SP09. Sponsoring districts account for 57% of our students and Monroe County residents account for another 26%. The number and percent of minority students is at an all-time high – they now account for 23% of our students. Over the past five years, the number of students age 16-21 went up 39% and the percent of male students increased from 37% to 40%. Fall-to spring retention rates are up from 69% to 73%, but there has been little change in the proportion of students requiring English or math remediation [15]. Unduplicated headcounts of noncredit students increased from 18,319 in AY0405 to 21,236 in AY0809. But with the declining economy, these enrollments began to fall in SP09.

### **Enrollment Projections**

Enrollment projections by the Office of Planning and Institutional Research indicate that the college will have 11,800 (approximately 9,600 FTEs) to 15,000 (approximately 12,200 FTEs) credit students by 2014:

#### **TEN-YEAR FALL ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS - TOTAL NCC**

<b>Middle Projection (using annual growth of 5% FTEs and 3% heads)</b>										
	Actual Past 4 Years				Actual Current Yr	Next 3 Years			5 Years	10 Years
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014	2019
Credit FTE's	6,080	6,626	6,830	7,303	8,287	8,701	9,136	9,593	10,577	13,499
Credit Heads	8,754	9,488	9,647	10,284	11,218	11,555	11,901	12,258	13,005	15,076

  

<b>High Projection (using actual average growth last five years: 8% FTEs and 6% heads)</b>										
	Actual Past 4 Years				Actual Current Yr	Next 3 Years			5 Years	10 Years
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014	2019
Credit FTE's	6,080	6,626	6,830	7,303	8,287	8,950	9,666	10,439	12,176	17,891
Credit Heads	8,754	9,488	9,647	10,284	11,218	11,891	12,605	13,361	15,012	20,090

  

<b>Low Projection (using annual growth of 3% FTEs and 1% heads)</b>										
	Actual Past 4 Years				Actual Current Yr	Next 3 Years			5 Years	10 Years
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014	2019
Credit FTE's	6,080	6,626	6,830	7,303	8,287	8,536	8,792	9,055	9,607	11,137
Credit Heads	8,754	9,488	9,647	10,284	11,218	11,330	11,443	11,558	11,790	12,392

Overall enrollment projections are consistent with those in the Office of Finance and Operations’s Ten Year Facilities Master Plan [9].

As noted above, the population in the Lehigh Valley has grown over the past five years but, as the economy has slowed, so has the rate of growth. High school graduates in the geographic area served by the College are predicted to have peaked in 2008, but the declining economy means that more high school graduates will attend less (rather than more) expensive colleges for their first two years. Participation rates in Northampton and Monroe Counties have increased over the past five years. The College regularly adds new academic programs to keep up with changing labor market demands and to attract students.

In FA09, NCC added a new division – Education and Academic Success - but enrollments are not expected to change dramatically at the college overall as a result. But if history means anything, online education at NCC should continue to grow – the number of students enrolled in online courses was up 11% from FA08 to FA09.

Enrollments at community colleges tend to increase in times of economic uncertainty and it is unlikely that NCC will buck this trend. It has been relatively conservative in its enrollment (and financial) projections, so it may in fact experience enrollments that exceed its projections.

**Finance Trends**

NCC’s annual financials are comprised of the Operating and Debt Service/Capital budgets. An annual audit of the financials is done each year by an external firm and the college has routinely received a clean (i.e., unqualified) opinion. The Operating Results for FY 2009 were \$62,450,669 not including grant activities (grants on an annual basis typically total \$10 to \$12 million). Debt Service is approximately \$4 million annually, Capital Expenditures are approximately \$2 million and leases total \$400k. In aggregate, the college’s activities exceed \$78 million. The operating budget is discussed in detail below.

**NCC’s Operating Activities**

**Revenue:** The operating revenue for FY 09 totaled \$62,450,669 and is based on funds derived from tuition and fees, the state, the local school districts, auxiliary enterprises and other sources. The breakdown is as follows:

- Tuition and Fees	\$31,801,292	51%
- State Appropriations	\$16,120,957	26%
- Auxiliary Enterprises	\$ 8,207,469	13%
- Sponsoring School Districts	\$ 5,189,097	8%
- Other Sources	<u>\$ 1,131,854</u>	<u>2%</u>
- Total	\$62,450,669	100%

The following chart compares FY 09 projected with the actual results of the last five years:

- FY 09	\$62,450,669
- FY 08	\$57,858,907
- FY 07	\$54,759,382
- FY 06	\$50,735,943
- FY 05	\$46,029,596

**Tuition and fee** revenue is based on projected full-time equivalent students and associated course fees for credit and non-credit courses. Credit tuition and fees are generated by assessing students per credit hour rates. Non-credit tuition and fee revenue is generated by charging varying rates per course, based on course costs and market rates. Tuition and fees represent 51% of college operating revenue. These revenues increased 10% over the past four fiscal years due to increased enrollment and the necessity that tuition account for an increasingly larger portion of the budget. Compared to other Pennsylvania community colleges, NCC's tuition is in the middle range. To meet the needs of the College without severely affecting students, NCC increases tuition by an approximately 3% each year to help offset escalating costs incurred annually.

**State Funding** was revised several years ago (2005-2006) when the state adopted ACT 46. Prior to that, revenue was based on a per FTE basis. The new process established an operating base that rewards high priority and high cost FTEs and also rewards growth in enrollment. There is a set amount of funds that the 14 Pennsylvania community colleges share in each year and the annual increase in those funds is typically around 3%. NCC receives less than one-third of its funding from the state because state increases have not kept pace with the college enrollment increases. But because of the college's growth over the last five years, revenue from the state has been positive due to the growth supplement pool established under the new reimbursement structure. The college has experienced an overall average increase of 7% over the past 4 years. Due to overall state financial budget issues, which will be a challenge for the next several fiscal years, projected future revenues are flat.

**Local Sponsor Funding** has also not kept pace with the college growth. The local funding comes from the eight sponsoring school districts, with each now having its own budget challenges. Each district contributes based on the percentage of students attending from its district in comparison to total enrollment (a five-year average is used). Annual increases have averaged 3% over the past five years.

**Auxiliary Enterprises** revenue comes from a variety of areas, including the bookstore, food services and child care. These areas have increased steadily over the past five years due to enrollment growth. **Other sources** include investment and other miscellaneous income.

**Expenses:** Expenditures are recorded and monitored by function (e.g., instruction, academic support) and by category (e.g., salaries, benefits, supplies). Salaries and Benefits combined make up approximately 73% of total operating expenditures. The breakdown by category for FY 09 is as follows:

- Salaries	\$33,251,394
- Benefits	\$ 8,554,607
- Physical Plant	\$ 2,685,114
- Supplies	\$ 1,144,394
- Institutional Services	\$ 1,575,905
- Food Services	\$ 1,912,460
- Book Store CGS	\$ 4,011,546
- All other	\$ 4,362,602
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$57,498,022</b>

### **Finance Projections**

Five-Year Revenue and Expenditure Forecast and Assumptions are consistent with the time frame of the college's strategic plan. Estimates are extremely conservative due to the uncertainty of the economy and our reliance on state and local funding.

**Revenue:** Forecasts for revenue for the next five years are based on the variability of the funding sources and demographics.

- Based on the historical pattern and given current and anticipated economic conditions, the local sponsor appropriation is expected to average 3% increases each year.
- State aide is projected to remain flat due to financial issues impacting the commonwealth in general.
- For FY 2010, the tuition and fee revenues are based on enrollment projections using current actual compared to the prior year. Beyond 2010, tuition and fee revenues are projected to increase slightly (3%) through 2013. This increase is a combination of price and slight enrollment increases.
- All other revenue is projected to increase slightly and is consistent with the above estimates.

**Expenditures:** Forecasts for expenditures are based on estimates of increased fixed and variable costs. These include:

- Salaries and fringe benefits are projected to increase due to increased part-time faculty need, cost of living adjustments, merit pay increases and health insurance increases.
- Contracted services, supplies and materials, communications, utilities and fixed charges are anticipated to increase due to changing economic conditions.
- Conferences, meeting, furniture and equipment expenditures are expected to remain constant.

### **NCC Debt Service/Capital/Lease Budget**

The NCC debt service/capital/lease budget totals approximately \$6.4 million annually. Debt service is \$4 million, capital expenditures typically average \$2 million and leases total \$400k. Sources of revenue for these expenditures include student capital fees of \$2.6 million, state reimbursement in support of debt service and leases totaling \$2.2 million, and transfers from the operating budget of approximately \$1.6 million. Depending on available funds, the state will also participate in various other capital projects that are submitted and compete with other college projects through a rating system. The college has recently completed a Ten-Year Facilities Master Plan [9], and implementation and funding for that is an ongoing process. The most significant project in that plan includes a new campus in Monroe County estimated at \$72 million. The college has also prepared a Ten-Year Environmental and Energy Conservation Plan [10] due to significant changes that are occurring within our market as a result of mandated utility deregulation.

### **Summary**

While the Office of Planning and IR projects enrollments at levels of 4%, 6% and 8% based on historical patterns, the Office of Finance conservatively budgets slight enrollment and revenue growth – a practice that has been followed for years. This allows the college to better control expenditures and prevents a “build it and they will come” situation. Due to the economic situation, enrollments could continue to increase at a stronger pace. If state and local sponsors continue to lag with their contributions, NCC will be challenged to meet the expenditures required to support the level of enrollment and will need to rely on tuition and fee increases to make up the shortfall. With all of these challenges and unknowns, NCC has ended each fiscal year from 2005 through 2009 with a surplus and projects to do the same through 2013. Additional sources of revenue will continue to be a focus area. Given the unstable nature of the funding sources, the College will be challenged to meet the increase of fixed costs, merit increases, health insurance increases and utility costs. The college must plan strategically and effectively in order to continue to deliver high quality educational programs and services within fiscal restraints.

**Northampton Community College Revenue and Expense Summary (Historical and Projected (FY05-FY13))**

Revenues	ACTUAL					Projected FY 10	Projected FY 11	Projected FY 12	Projected FY 13
	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09				
Student Tuition	15,259,660	16,395,484	17,803,593	18,525,858	21,538,109	23,261,158	23,958,992	24,677,762	25,418,095
Fees	1,955,086	2,231,564	2,568,159	2,639,014	3,174,531	3,491,984	3,596,744	3,704,646	3,815,785
School Districts	4,607,782	4,746,011	4,888,392	5,035,044	5,189,097	5,344,770	5,505,113	5,670,266	5,840,374
State Appropriations	12,144,491	13,590,226	14,913,333	15,712,061	16,120,957	16,120,957	16,120,957	16,120,957	16,120,957
Income from Investments	202,054	496,088	748,694	636,530	389,365	401,046	413,077	425,470	438,234
Non Credit Programs (w/o state)	3,471,992	4,086,357	3,780,473	4,422,473	4,263,509	4,391,414	4,523,157	4,658,851	4,798,617
Student Activities	1,681,556	1,952,027	2,280,521	2,496,920	2,825,143	3,107,657	3,200,887	3,296,914	3,395,821
Food Service	1,365,282	1,472,688	1,591,052	1,760,454	1,877,173	1,933,488	1,991,493	2,051,238	2,112,775
Bookstore	3,987,985	4,172,150	4,571,926	4,857,360	5,253,059	5,410,651	5,572,970	5,740,159	5,912,364
Resaurant	328,302	344,608	348,213	332,563	354,442	365,075	376,028	387,308	398,928
Child Care	665,867	654,994	685,881	714,954	722,795	744,479	766,813	789,818	813,512
Other Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EDA & RACP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other non operating revenue	359,539	593,746	579,145	725,670	742,489	764,764	787,707	811,338	835,678
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>46,029,596</b>	<b>50,735,943</b>	<b>54,759,382</b>	<b>57,858,901</b>	<b>62,450,669</b>	<b>65,337,443</b>	<b>66,813,938</b>	<b>68,334,727</b>	<b>69,901,140</b>
<b>Expenses</b>									
Salaries	25,318,000	26,840,899	28,640,240	30,648,270	33,251,394	35,246,478	36,303,872	37,392,988	38,514,778
Benefits	6,087,670	6,634,106	7,327,260	7,708,165	8,554,607	9,153,429	9,794,170	10,381,820	11,004,729
Physical Plant	1,928,279	2,480,897	2,618,340	2,691,749	2,685,114	2,819,370	2,847,563	2,876,039	2,904,799
Supplies	927,799	898,531	961,326	1,057,035	1,144,394	1,167,282	1,178,955	1,190,744	1,202,652
Institutional Services	982,724	1,253,435	1,276,038	1,472,838	1,575,905	1,607,423	1,623,497	1,639,732	1,656,130
Food Services	1,420,793	1,557,280	1,631,646	1,835,937	1,912,460	1,950,709	1,970,216	1,989,918	2,009,818
Restaurant	207,866	211,371	211,316	211,868	214,297	218,583	220,769	222,976	225,206
Bookstore - CGS	2,897,732	3,163,209	3,611,904	3,558,430	4,011,546	4,091,777	4,132,695	4,174,022	4,215,762
Other	3,178,216	3,041,795	3,339,661	3,581,479	4,148,305	4,231,271	4,273,584	4,316,320	4,359,483
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>42,949,079</b>	<b>46,081,523</b>	<b>49,617,731</b>	<b>52,765,771</b>	<b>57,498,022</b>	<b>60,486,322</b>	<b>62,345,321</b>	<b>64,184,560</b>	<b>66,093,356</b>
Transfers to Plant Funds	(1,025,162)	(1,112,073)	(1,402,652)	(1,704,562)	(1,698,203)	(1,698,203)	(1,698,203)	(1,698,203)	(1,698,203)
<b>Net Available</b>	<b>2,055,355</b>	<b>3,542,347</b>	<b>3,738,999</b>	<b>3,388,568</b>	<b>3,254,444</b>	<b>3,152,918</b>	<b>2,770,414</b>	<b>2,451,964</b>	<b>2,109,581</b>

## Section 5: Organized and Sustained Processes to Assess Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning\*

This section provides an overview of the College's organized processes and plans for assessing institutional effectiveness and student learning. It answers two basic questions:

- As an institution, how well is the College collectively doing what we say we are doing?
- And, how does the College support student learning, a fundamental aspect of institutional effectiveness?

And, per the MSCHE *PRR Handbook* (pp 24-25), answers to these two questions are organized as follows:

- Do institutional leaders support and value a culture of assessment?
- Are goals, including learning outcomes, clearly articulated at every level?
- Have appropriate assessment processes been implemented for an appropriate proportion of goals?
- Where assessment processes have not yet been implemented, have appropriate assessment processes been planned?
- Do assessment results provide convincing evidence that the institution is achieving its mission and goals, including key learning outcomes?
- Have assessment results been shared in useful forms and discussed widely with appropriate constituents?
- Have results led to appropriate decisions and improvements about curricula and pedagogy, programs and services, resource allocation, and institutional goals and plans?
- Have assessment processes been reviewed regularly?
- Where does the institution appear to be going with assessment?

Do NCC leaders support and value a culture of assessment?

Yes, NCC leaders *strongly* support and value assessment. As noted in the Institutional Effectiveness Plan [5], which provides extensive detail on items mentioned in this section of the PRR, the College provides more-than-adequate guidance, resources, coordination, and support for assessment:

- It provides structural support through a wide variety of mechanisms, which include the Student Learning Outcomes Committee (SLOC), the Student Learning Improvement Conversations (SLIC), and the General Education Core Outcomes Review Committee. The SLOC provides a framework under which academic assessment is conducted [16]. Assessments of academic support, administrative areas, and Community Education are conducted under the purview of Vice Presidents in these respective areas.
- NCC leaders also support the College's involvement in Achieving the Dream (AtD) and college-based efforts including but not limited to the Developmental Education Task Force, the First Year Experience Task Force, and the African American Male Retention Task Force.

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\*The College's Institutional Effectiveness Plan provides extensive detail concerning assessment processes, plans, and results, and multiple references are made to it in this Section. The reader is strongly encouraged to read this Plan in conjunction with this Section to obtain a *complete* overview of NCC activities vis-à-vis assessment.

- The College provides administrative and technical support through the Office of Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR) and through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The College provides for professional development via CTL workshops devoted to assessment and assessment-related topics;
- The SLOC provides monetary compensation for faculty assessment activities: “Faculty members of the SLOC from disciplines/departments which have SLOC-approved projects (proposals that have been approved by the SLOC) will serve as project leaders and will be compensated with one ICH/semester...Faculty project participants who are not on the committee will be compensated \$350 for their participation in the development process and the scoring of artifacts.” It also provides financial support so that faculty and staff can attend and present at professional meetings concerning assessment.

Assessment efforts are recognized and valued, as are efforts to improve teaching. Portions of most professional and administrative staff meetings, as well as Board of Trustees meetings, are devoted to reviewing and discussing assessment findings. Results from the recent AtD survey on the “Use of Data to Improve Student Success” provide additional evidence about the level of College support for assessment: Faculty and administrators at NCC (even more so than their colleagues at other AtD colleges) report that the NCC leadership team is clear about AtD goals and is committed to using data to make decisions, and that we are working collaboratively to improve programs and services:

Leadership clear about AtD goals*	NCC	AtD Colleges in PA
Faculty	5.7	5.2
Administrators	6.2	4.9

Leadership committed to using data to make decisions*	NCC	AtD in PA
Faculty	5.9	5.5
Administrators	6.4	5.6

NCC works collaboratively to improve programs*	NCC	AtD in PA
Faculty	5.7	5.0
Administrators	6.1	5.2

\*1 is low, 7 is high

Are goals, including learning outcomes, clearly articulated at every level?

The General Education Standard in Middle State’s *Characteristics* is as follows:

*The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy.*

NCC’s General Education Core Curriculum adheres to this standard: it is designed to provide “an important set of knowledge and skills that will help our graduates to continue learning, adapt to change, and become citizens who can make wise choices and contribute to their community.” NCC’s GE proficiencies include those included in the Middle States standard cited above (NCC 2008-2009 Catalog, pp 41-42). Every NCC program has a clearly articulated set of learning outcomes, as does every course. New course outline guidelines were developed in FA08 and require explicit links between student

learning outcomes and academic program-level outcomes or general education core outcomes [17]. Information on learning outcome assessments, including techniques, is also required.

Institutional-level goals are stated in the College's mission, which is to provide "excellent, accessible and comprehensive learning experiences in partnership with the dynamic, diverse communities we serve." This mission statement drives the development of unit-level, program-level and course-level goals and learning outcomes. And these goals and learning outcomes drive the assessment process at all levels as well.

Have appropriate assessment processes been implemented for an appropriate proportion of goals? Where assessment processes have not yet been implemented, have appropriate assessment processes been planned?

Chart A below indicates the areas in which recent assessments have occurred or are occurring, along with the documentation for those that have been done. The documentation consists primarily of internal file references, as the intranet (an ideal site on which to put assessment findings) is still under development. All areas within the College have been "touched" by the assessment process in one form or another. While the college has some way to go in terms of 100% participation of all faculty and staff, we believe that we have made great strides since the self-study of five years ago. As noted in the introduction to the IEP, assessments at NCC focus on outcomes and improvements; we use existing data when possible (although it is not always possible), and present findings in formats to support planning, resource allocation and decision-making.

NCC's Academic Assessment Plan, outlined in Chart B below, includes assessments that will occur at various levels from 2009-2010 through 2012-2013. CTL, Learning Center and Library assessments occur under the auspices of the VPAA. The SLOC, as noted above, provides the framework under which faculty-led assessments are conceived, implemented and evaluated. These include program-level assessments within each academic area – degree, certificate, and diploma programs are reviewed every five years under NCC's program audit process. Data on enrollment, retention and success help to inform the evaluation of academic programs. Selected degree programs will incorporate authentic assessment projects. As also noted above, GE assessments fall under the purview of SLOC, as do the assessments of Gateway and selected AtD (math, English, reading, counseling) courses. Gateway courses (those with enrollments over 100 students) were identified as part of the AtD initiative.

NCC's plan for assessments of its institutional effectiveness and of its academic support (Student Services), administration (Computer Services, Human Resources, Institutional Advancement and Finance), and Community Education areas is outlined in Chart C. It follows the same timeframe as above, i.e., 2009-2010 through 2012-2013.

Do assessment results provide convincing evidence that the institution is achieving its mission and goals, including key learning outcomes?

NCC is achieving its mission and goals, including key learning outcomes. The *Indicators of Effectiveness* [7] is a key document – it provides evidence concerning our mission and our three strategic initiatives. And, as noted in "Assessing NCC's Mission," CCSSE and CCFSSE data, along with data from NCC's alumni and climate surveys support the finding that NCC is achieving its mission [18].

In terms of direct assessments of General Education student learning outcomes, an activity undertaken with the guidance of NCC's SLOC, the College has completed its writing outcomes assessment. It was a fruitful exercise: the College has found that not all faculty and instructors are aware of 'writing-intensive' course requirements and that more faculty development might be needed in terms of



rubric development and scoring. The College is in the midst of its assessments of the GE quantitative literacy and scientific learning outcomes, and is now planning for the GE assessment of oral communication and computer literacy [19]. Indirect assessments of General Education outcomes and skills show that the College is meeting its GE outcomes. Item 12 on the CCSSE survey asks, “How much has your experience at the college contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?” - in 2009, NCC ranked at or above the national cohort in 14 of the 15 areas [20]. NCC alumni also agree that the College contributes a great deal to their writing and speaking skills.

In addition to GE core assessments, SLOC participates in other NCC assessments, such as program- and course-level assessments. Outcomes for such projects can be found in “SLOC Assessments and SLIC Work” [21].

An assessment of SLOC activities for 2008-2009 was conducted, with results revealing that SLOC was effective in developing and leading assessment projects and that SLOC members felt more comfortable at year-end than they had at the beginning of the year when discussing assessment issues with their colleagues. When asked what they had learned, SLOC member comments included “Everything is bigger and more complicated and takes more time than at first is apparent” and “How difficult assessment can be and how overwhelming it can be. I also have learned that results of our assessment can help us pinpoint areas that we can do a better job with.”

Academic program audits, accredited program assessments, assessments of the NCC Library, Learning Center and CTL, and assessments of teaching effectiveness all provide evidence that the College is achieving its mission, goals and learning outcomes. As an example, NCC’s Dental Hygiene’s comprehensive assessment plan was cited as being “exemplary” by the Commission on Dental Accreditation. The program recently assessed student dental charts and through targeted instruction reduced errors considerably from SP07 to SP09.

Under the auspices of AtD, a veritable “ton” of assessment has occurred over the past few years with the College’s developmental courses, especially math and English courses. Examples of changes that have occurred as a result of this work include the adoption of a new math placement test, creation of a new developmental-level pre-algebra math course, new college success courses, and two new developmental English courses. In FA09, a Professional Learning Community was established with math faculty, as was one with faculty teaching developmental English, Reading and the college success course. Finally, AtD focuses on rates of student success in their courses, and success rates in 10 “gateway” courses (those enrolling over 100 students in fall semesters) are on the assessment agenda for 2009-2010. Complete details are available in the AtD evaluation plan [8].

Assessments of academic support, administrative areas and Community Education also indicate that the college is meeting its goals and learning outcomes. Numerous details are provided in the IEP. As an example, NCC regularly assesses its orientations for new students and their parents and, based on these assessments, changes are made almost every year. In FA09, additional orientation sessions were available to accommodate increases in enrollment and ‘mini’ orientations were added; the latter were so successful that they will also be available in January, 2010. (This fall also featured 60 NCC faculty and staff as ‘parking lot greeters’ on the first day of classes to help new students find their way to their classes - this too will be continued in SP10.)

In sum, NCC’s assessment results provide convincing evidence that we are achieving our mission and goals, including key learning outcomes across all areas of the College. But, as the results of any assessment show, we can always make improvements.

Have assessment results been shared in useful forms and discussed widely with appropriate constituents?

Assessment updates are regularly provided at administrative and professional staff meetings. For example, SLOC activity was featured at a SP09 professional staff meeting. AtD, SLIC and results from the SP08 Campus Climate survey were featured during the FA09 Opening Days. Results from major surveys or benchmark studies (CCSSE, CCFSSSE, NCCBP, etc.) are regularly shared with the Board of Trustees and the President’s cabinet, and then with all staff, faculty and interested external audiences. “Data Corners,” which provide information on AtD at NCC, appear in “Today at NCC” (a daily email sent to NCC faculty and staff) to keep all employees up-to-date. Assessment data is also shared among NCC committees and task forces, such as the AtD Core Team, the GE Core Outcomes Review Committee, the SLOC, the Developmental Education Task Force, and the First Year Experience Task Force.

Finally, results from the AtD survey on the “Use of Data to Improve Student Success” indicate that NCC faculty frequently participate in organized discussions concerning the academic performance of students – even more so than their colleagues at AtD colleges:

Frequency of Faculty Participation in Discussions about Academic Performance	Mean Faculty Ratings*	
	NCC	AtD in PA
Improving academic achievement or closing achievement gaps	5.1	4.8
Academic needs or performance of students of color	4.4	3.6
Academic needs or performance of low-income students	4.2	3.4

\*1=Never; 4=Once a year; 7=6 or more times a year

Have assessment results led to appropriate decisions and improvements about curricula and pedagogy, programs and services, resource allocation, and institutional goals and plans?

Yes, NCC has made modifications in curricula and pedagogy, programs and services, resource allocation, and institutional goals and plans. Multiple AtD-related and other assessments have led to extensive curricula and pedagogical changes in the College’s developmental courses, as follows:

Math:

- Develop MATH020 (pre-algebra course) in FA07 because of low success rates in MATH022
- Shift to use of Accuplacer as math placement test in FA07
- Reduce MATH022 class size from 35 to 24 in FA07
- Pilot SI in four sections of MATH022 in FA07 (discontinued in SP09)
- Begin using common test items in targeted MATH022 sections in FA07

English:

- Offer ENGL025 and ENGL026 in SP10 to accommodate low-scoring students on English placement test who do not do well in ENGL020

Counseling:

- COUN150 becomes mandatory for students placing into ENGL020 and READ017 in FA09
- COUN092 becomes mandatory for students in two lowest literacy remediation levels (ENGL025 and READ016) in SP10

Additionally, effective FA09, if students need developmental work, they must begin that work in their first semester at NCC and continue until the requirements are completed. Other examples are provided below.

- Pedagogy: As a result of the Accounting assessment that has been conducted to date, instructors are now spending an increased amount of time on the material covered in the first few weeks of the course. They are also providing more assessments on this foundational material to determine if students are learning the information that they need to be successful in the remainder of the course.
- Programs: NCC's Business and Technology's Paralegal Program (as noted in its Assessment Plan - AY 2008-09 and Forward) has made the following changes as a result of assessments:
  - Revision of Paralegal program outcomes to more accurately delineate expected goals of the overall program. Result of several years of experience with actual graduates and faculty input.
  - Internship onsite time changed from 80 hours to 100 hours. The change was implemented to provide students more opportunity to perform tasks indicative of the outcomes desired from the program. Extended onsite time was requested by many students in evaluation of their internship experience as well as being recommended by faculty, the NCC Advisory Committee, and onsite intern mentors.
  - New legal specialty elective course – Contract Law PARL 162 – added to series of electives from which Paralegal students could elect courses. The additional course was created to enhance the students' opportunities to learn about and develop additional paralegal skills reflected in the program's outcomes. Survey of current students, results of prior local legal community surveys, and recommendations of the NCC Paralegal Advisory Committee were utilized to enact this curriculum addition.
  - New Assessment Plan developed, drafted and reviewed with faculty, staff, and NCC Paralegal Advisory Committee. Goal of the plan is to identify and implement additional assessment methodologies that will measure performance and accomplishment of program outcomes.
- Human Resources: Human Resources assesses its New Employee Orientations and Northampton 101 sessions each semester. Results have led to modifications to the two-day new employee orientation: adding a panel discussion with other newly-hired employees, redesigning the major presentation, and adding additional components on student and academic services. With the Northampton 101 series, additional sessions geared toward new teaching faculty were added and other sessions were collapsed in order to respond to concerns about the number of sessions in the program.
- Library: The Library tracks the usage of its databases and, with input from the Library Advisory committee and clusters, it makes decisions regarding renewals or replacements of less frequently used resources. Based on the growth of the Monroe campus and the online student population and the addition of the Fowler Center, the Library replaced its Literary Criticism series of print resources and replaced them with online resources. For the same reasons, the Library has added online study guides to assist students with doing research in various subjects. It also purchased Camtasia software to produce information literacy videos to provide library instruction to the growing online student population; it is tracking statistics to determine the usage of these offerings.
- Resource Allocation and Institutional Goals and Plans: At NCC, assessment results are used to guide institutional goals and plans, as well as resource allocation decisions. As noted in the IEP, the college's mission and goals are assessed through a variety of methods, and results are used to shape the college's direction. At the college level, this is perhaps illustrated through our involvement in AtD, through new academic policies and courses, through the establishment of the President's Leadership Institute, and through the development and use of the new faculty observation rubric.

The President's Leadership Institute (PLI) is designed for succession planning at NCC. (see <http://www.communitycollegetimes.com/article.cfm?ArticleId=1137> for an article that appeared in *Community College Times* about NCC's PLI in August, 2008). This program was assessed at the end of

its first year; as a result, modifications were made in the 2009-2010 Institute and future assessments will more closely align with program objectives.

Finally, the college recently adopted a new faculty observation rubric, which is being fine-tuned as it is used. Observers are continuing to "norm" themselves and they are also examining areas that require attention to determine what might be required in terms of professional training. For example, observers are finding that class goals are supported by pedagogical methods, and that instructors are passionate about content and that they motivate students. They are also finding that some areas need attention – instructors need to clearly link course outcomes to class topics and assignments and to assess student learning on a more frequent basis.

Have assessment processes been reviewed regularly? Have the reviews led to appropriate decisions and improvements in assessment processes and support for them?

Like every other entity, the College has developed its assessment expertise over time. Much was learned from early efforts and the cycle of learning continues. Areas with considerable expertise in assessment have improved their assessments and, through discussions, that expertise is shared with others within the College. Accredited programs, for example, have more experience (generally speaking) with assessment than those programs with no accreditation requirements.

Assessment processes have been informally reviewed on a regular basis from an institution-wide perspective. On a smaller scale, though, the AtD assessments conducted with developmental courses have evolved and improved over time. The CTL and OPIR have spent considerable time providing guidance for assessments that provide data for sound decision-making and improvements.

Where is NCC going with assessment?

As noted at the conclusion of the College's IEP, NCC is committed to internalizing assessment as an ongoing institutional practice. Perhaps the strongest external validation of NCC's position was provided by the feedback letter dated July 6, 2009 that the College received in response to its 2008-2009 AtD activities. MDC was encouraged by several aspects of assessment and the use of data at NCC, including its committed leadership; its use of evidence to improve policies, programs and services; its broad engagement; and its systematic institutional improvement. Specifically, it commended NCC's "use of disaggregated, longitudinal data in institutional decision-making" and "the use of data to redesign programs and dismantle unsuccessful pilots." OPIR tracks its reports related to assessment and evaluation [22], and it plans to post them to the intranet for easy accessibility by faculty and staff.

NCC has engaged faculty and staff, and it has sufficient momentum to sustain its assessment processes. There are no significant gaps in assessment processes, such as key areas where no assessment plans have been developed. And, as noted in Charts A, B and C below, assessment plans have been laid for the next four years.

## CHART A: NCC ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	DOCUMENTATION
Achieving the Dream	f:\jhirt\atd 2009-2010\evaluation plan - fa09 update.doc
African American Male Retention Task Force	New for 2009-2010
Alumni Surveys	f:\jhirt\pr\alumni survey class of 2007.pdf
Annual Action Plans	f:\jhirt\plans.2008-2009\master.ye2009.doc
Cabinet Planning Retreat	f:\jhirt\plans.2009-2010\cabinet priorities.09-10.doc
CCSSE and CCFSSSE	f:\jhirt\ccsse 2009\overview of 2009 ccsse results.doc; ccfssse not yet completed
Developmental Education Task Force	g:\nccdocs\atd\developmental education committee\minutes\minutes dec sept 10, 2009.doc; g:\nccdocs\atd\developmental education committee\minutes\dev ed committee recommendations 08-09.rtf
First Year Experience Task Force	f:\jhirt\pr\first year task force 2009 info.doc
General Education Core Outcomes Review Committee	g:\ge core committee\minutes_28sept09_ge core.doc
Indicators of Effectiveness	f:\jhirt\indicators\indicators.oct 2009 good.doc
NCC Climate Survey	f:\jhirt\pr\climate survey fa08.pdf
NCCBP	f:\jhirt\nccbp 2008 folder (multiple reports)
New Student Survey - Marketing	f:\jhirt\bast\fall 2007 survey of new students.doc
President's Leadership Institute	f:\jhirt\pr\pli assessment.doc
Student Learning Outcomes Committee	sloc folder in g ; g:\sloc committee\sloc minutes 9.29.09.doc; f:\jhirt\sloc\sloc questionnaire results.05.09.doc
<b>ACADEMIC AFFAIRS</b>	
Center for Teaching and Learning	f:\jhirt\pr\ctl needs assessment survey.sp09.doc
Library	f:\jhirt\pr\library survey 2009.pdf
Online Education	
Faculty Observation Forms	f:\jhirt\pr\faculty observation rubric.doc; f:\jhirt\pr\faculty observation rubric.results.doc

	DOCUMENTATION
<b>ALLIED HEALTH &amp; SCIENCE</b>	Program Audits; SLOC and SLIC files
<b>BUSINESS &amp; TECHNOLOGY</b>	Program Audits; SLOC and SLIC files
<b>EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS</b>	Program Audits; SLOC and SLIC files; f:\jhirt\pr\learning center 2009.doc
<b>HUMANITIES &amp; SOCIAL SCIENCE</b>	Program Audits; SLOC and SLIC files

<b>STUDENT SERVICES</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>
New Student and Parent Orientations	f:\jhirt\pr\orientation report09.doc
Advising and Transfer	CCSSE
Athletics	New for 2009-2010: f:\jhirt\pr\tucker.exhausted eligibility survey.doc; f:\jhirt\pr\tucker.returning student survey.doc
Career Services	CCSSE
Counseling and Support Services	Study Skills Marathons; Withdrawing Student Survey; CCSSE
Disability Services	f:\jhirt\assessment 2008-2009\transition expo2008 evaluation.doc
Financial Aid	CCSSE
Student Life: Leadership Seminars	f:\jhirt\assessment 2008-2009\pologruto.emerging leaders - core values assessment.doc
Registrar	f:\jhirt\pr\bast.grad audit survey.pdf
Residence Life	Cultural Connections Surveys
Service Learning	Faculty Service Learning Surveys
<b>COMPUTER SERVICES</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>
Professional Development Needs Assessment & Faculty Satisfaction w Classroom Technology	New for 2009-2010
Surveys on Critical Computer & Network Policies & Evaluate Helpdesk Work Orders	New for 2010-2011
Measure Impact of CTL/IT Programs & Survey Technical Support Services Personnel	New for 2011-2012
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>
New NCC Staff Orientation	VP files
Institutional Research	f:\jhirt\pr\atd - use of data to improve student success.doc; f:\jhirt\assessment 2009-2010\sample assessment studies.doc
Wellness Program	Departmental Reports
<b>INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>
Communications Survey-Students	F:\jhirt\bast\Communications Survey Results Spring 09.doc
Benchmarking	VP files
<b>FINANCE</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>
Benchmarking	VP files
Facilities	New for 2009-2010: Work Order and Set-Up Forms
<b>COMMUNITY EDUCATION</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>
	Fowler Center student survey
	VP files

## CHART B: NCC ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PLAN

<b>VP, ACADEMIC AFFAIRS</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Center for Teaching and Learning			X	
Learning Center	X	X	X	X
Library – Information Literacy	X	X	X	X
<b>ACADEMIC PROGRAMS</b>				
<b>ALLIED HEALTH &amp; SCIENCE</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Biology	Audit			
Biotechnology	Audit			
Chemistry	Audit			
Dental Hygiene (Accredited)	X	X	X	Audit
Diagnostic Medial Sonography (Accredited)		Pre-audit	Audit	
Funeral Service Education (Accredited)			Pre-audit	Audit
Nursing – RN (Accredited)		Pre-audit	Audit	
Nursing – LPN (Accredited) Due 2015				
Radiography (Accredited) Due 2014		X – Interim Report		
Surgical Technology (Accredited)				X
Veterinary Technician (Accredited)		Pre-audit	Audit	
<b>BUSINESS &amp; TECHNOLOGY</b>				
Accounting				Pre-audit
Business Management/Business Administration			Pre-audit	Audit
Engineering		Pre-audit	Audit	
Hotel Restaurant Management		Pre-audit	Audit	
Paralegal (Accredited)		Pre-audit	Audit	
<b>EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS</b>				
Early Childhood Education (Accredited) Due 2014				Pre-Audit
<b>HUMANITIES &amp; SOCIAL SCIENCE</b>				
Communication Design (reviewed every two years)	Portfolio	Audit	Portfolio	Portfolio
Communication Studies		Audit/ GE Assessment		
General Studies			Pre-audit	Audit
Radio/TV		Pre-audit	Audit	

CHART B: CONTINUED

<b>GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Quantitative Literacy	X			
Science	X			
Writing	X			
Computer Literacy		X		
Oral Communications		X		
Diversity			X	
Social Science			X	
Information Literacy				X
Arts And Humanities				X
<b>ATD ASSESSMENTS</b>				
Developmental Math	X	X	X	X
Developmental English	X	X	X	X
Developmental Reading	X	X	X	X
Academic Success Course(s)	X	X	X	X
<b>GATEKEEPER ASSESSMENTS</b>				
ACCT101 – Embedded in Accreditation				X
BUSA101 – Embedded in Accreditation			X	
CMTH102 – Embedded in Accreditation		X		
ENGL101C			X	
PSYC103				X



**CHART C: NCC ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS,  
ACADEMIC SUPPORT, ADMINISTRATION, AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

<b>INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Achieving the Dream	X	X	X	X
Alumni Surveys	X	X	X	X
Annual Action Plans	X	X	X	X
Cabinet Planning Retreat	X	X	X	X
CCSSE and CFSSE	X			X
Indicators of Effectiveness	X	X	X	X
NCC Climate Survey				X
NCCBP	X	X	X	X
NCC Task Forces and Committees		X		X
New Student Survey - Marketing		X		X
President's Leadership Institute	X	X	X	X
Student Learning Outcomes Committee	X	X	X	X
Student Learning Improvement Conversations	X		X	

<b>STUDENT SERVICES</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
New Student and Parent Orientations	X	X	X	X
Advising and Transfer			X	
Athletics	X			
Career Services			X	
Counseling and Support Services		X		
Disability Services	X	X		
Presidential Leadership Institute	X	X	X	X
Registrar	X			
Residence Life	X			
Service Learning		X		
Student Life	X	X	X	X

CHART C: CONTINUED

<b>COMPUTER SERVICES</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Professional Development Needs Assessment & Faculty Satisfaction w Classroom Technology	X			
Surveys on Critical Computer & Network Policies & Evaluate Helpdesk Work Orders		X		
Measure Impact of CTL/IT Programs & Survey Technical Support Services Personnel			X	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>				
New NCC Staff Orientation	X	X	X	X
Institutional Research			X	
<b>INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT</b>				
Communications Survey-Students	X			
Benchmarking	X	X	X	X
<b>FINANCE</b>				
Benchmarking	X	X	X	X
Set-up and Work Order Evaluations	X	X	X	X
<b>COMMUNITY EDUCATION</b>				
	X	X	X	X

## Section 6: Linked Institutional Planning and Budgeting Processes

Improving institutional quality at NCC is a function of a close relationship among mission, planning, resource allocation, and assessment. The College's mission and strategic plan are central to its planning process, which flows from the mission and facilitates the refinement and development of the College's annual goals and objectives. Year-end reviews of annual plans, including assessment activities, are useful indications of where resources have been and can be used most effectively. The outcome of the College's planning process is to effect renewal and growth that reflects the changing needs of NCC and the community it serves, and that reflects budget realities (both opportunities and constraints) as well.

NCC developed a new strategic plan for 2009-2014 [2], and this document plays a key role in the planning process at the College. The planning process includes both goal planning – determining ways to enhance student success – and budget planning – ensuring the availability of resources to support the goals. At NCC, both efforts are linked to our mission and strategic initiatives of access, excellence and engagement. Planning is a continual process focused on fulfilling institutional and unit priorities and identifying, allocating, and reallocating resources as necessary to achieve these objectives.

To ensure effective planning, the Office of Planning and Institutional Research identifies environmental trends and their implications on a regular basis. It also disseminates information about student learning outcomes and results from surveys at all levels of the College (e.g., AtD, CCSSE, climate surveys, alumni and new student surveys). Presentations concerning these materials are made at professional staff, cabinet, advisory committee, and Board of Trustees meetings as appropriate, and are used to identify and shape College goals. Thus, at NCC, planning is a data-driven process.

In terms of the College's formal planning process, each year the President's Cabinet holds an annual retreat in June at which the current year's plans are assessed and priorities for the coming year are discussed and established. Administrative departments then hold planning meetings to develop their departmental plans and priorities. These plans are generally complete by July 31, with academic division and departmental planning taking place during the opening days in August. All plans and priorities are developed within the context of the three strategic initiatives of access, excellence and engagement. For 2008-2009, for example, of the 80 objectives for 2008-2009, 32% were devoted to access, 51% to excellence, and 16% to engagement [6]. Over the past few years, with increasing emphasis on student learning, more of our plans are devoted to excellence. Plans include a delineation of outcome-oriented actions, implementation strategies, and a means to assess results. Assessment results, linked to the College's mission, enable each area to make improvements and refinements as needed in subsequent years.

The operational budget planning process is tied to NCC's mission and goals, to the planning processes cited above, and to the budget cycle of sponsoring school districts and the state [23]. The planning process discussed above is of necessity within the parameters of anticipated funding. In October, the President's Cabinet reviews the parameters for the budget, with Finance and Operations distributing manpower reports, preliminary budget request forms, etc. By mid-November, a budget is presented to Cabinet for its review, with a Board of Trustees update in early December. Budget books are prepared in mid-December, and the Board reviews them in January. Following this review, budget books are distributed to school board members; budget presentations are made to the eight sponsoring school districts in the fall (five of them must approve the budget), with final budget approval in the spring.

The capital budgeting process is on a slightly different calendar: this starts in January, when VPs, deans and directors are asked to submit their prioritized requests. The President's Cabinet reviews and prioritizes requests multiple times, and identifies three to four of the larger projects for possible funding by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). By late spring, capital projects to be funded – e.g.,

new parking lot, revamped cafeteria, repairing roofs, updating labs – have been identified, so that work can be completed during the summer.

In sum, then, taking into consideration the College's action plans and priorities, personnel and debt service as well as the technology upgrades and deployment, the president, the vice presidents, the deans, and the department directors put together a yearly operating budget in the fall preceding the upcoming fiscal year. As funding is released, project plans are re-evaluated to address changes that have occurred in the environment and student needs. Resources are allocated in direct relationship to the action plans developed and approved by president's Cabinet. Some examples of planning over the past few years that led to major allocation of resources include:

- Developing the Fowler Family Southside Center, including renovations to the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors, as well as providing new programs, especially those related to the Sands casino
- Modifications to the Monroe campus to accommodate increased enrollment (based in part on findings from the SP07 planning day results), as well as new staff and programs
- Increasing emphasis on student success (e.g., AtD, NCCBP, CCSSE surveys, new Education and Academic Success academic division)

The College recently completed a Ten-Year Facilities Master Plan [9] and a Ten-Year Environmental and Energy Conservation Plan [10], both of which entail extensive and integrated planning and budgeting. It also recently completed its annual Teaching, Learning and Technology Roundtable (TLTR) resource allocation process, resulting in the planned expenditures of almost \$500,000 for technology in the classroom (e.g., TurningPoint Audience Response System Kits, new SmartRooms or SmartCarts, and other new technologies) [24].

Currently, the College is preparing a strategic plan for online education, where enrollment is rapidly increasing. This was identified as a cabinet priority in June, 2009. A strategic plan is under development, with heavy involvement of the VP for Academic Affairs, the Director of Online Learning, and Finance. Expansion will require resources for software, people and space, all of which will be fed into the College's budget process. NCC is also hoping to build a new Monroe campus, which entails considerable planning and budgeting activities, including, most recently, the preparation of a report for a Moody's Investment Service bond rating of NCC.

A variety of tools are used to assess the effectiveness of plans and the resources that have been allocated to each area in the institution. Enrollment reports, satisfaction surveys, market research, student retention, and placement figures are but a few of the ways that goals are evaluated. In addition, each area of the College has its own method of assessment, identified in its annual action plan, to evaluate the results of its initiatives. The Board of Trustees also plays a part in the planning and assessment process, reviewing program audits, new program proposals, facilities plans, enrollment reports and trends, student and alumni surveys, and market research, to mention only a few. Using these reports, along with strategic plans, annual action plans and mid-year reports, the Board evaluates the goals and direction of the College, insuring that they reflect its mission and vision.

The planning process is an integral part of the NCC culture. (Although admittedly, events sometimes dictate that we act quickly without as much time as we would like to plan all details.). Planning and assessment determine major college goals and activities, the budget, and the actions of NCC faculty and staff. NCC has been and continues to be committed to a participatory planning and budgeting process that advances our access, excellence and engagement initiatives.

The link between planning and budgeting allocation has become more transparent at NCC over the past few years. Each year, a mid-year and a year-end review of action plans are sent to all faculty and

staff, including part-timers. And, each year, the Office of Finance and Operations presents an overview of the annual budget so that faculty and staff are knowledgeable about the process and have an opportunity to ask questions about it.